

MEMOIRS
OF
JOSEPH GRIMALDI.



JOSEPH GRAYDON

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OF
JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

EDITED BY
"B O Z."

With Illustrations by George Cruikshank.

A NEW EDITION,
WITH NOTES AND ADDITIONS, REVISED
BY CHARLES WHITEHEAD.

LONDON.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

It is some years now, since we first conceived a strong veneration for Clowns, and an intense anxiety to know what they did with themselves out of pantomime time, and off the stage. As a child, we were accustomed to pester our relations and friends with questions out of number concerning these gentry;—whether their appetite for sausages and such like wares was always the same, and if so, at whose expense they were maintained; whether they were ever taken up for pilfering other people's goods, or were forgiven by everybody because it was only done in fun; how it was they got such beautiful complexions, and where they lived; and whether they were born Clowns, or gradually turned into Clowns as they grew up. On these and a thousand other points our curiosity was insatiable. Nor were our speculations confined to Clowns alone: they extended to Harlequins, Pantaloons, and Columbines, all of whom we believed to be real and veritable personages, existing in the same forms and characters all the year round. How often have we wished that the Pantaloon were our god-father! and how often thought that to marry a Columbine would be to attain the

We feel again all the pride of standing in a body on the platform, the observed of all observers in the crowd below, while the junior usher pays away twenty-four ninepences to a stout gentleman under a Gothic arch, with a hoop of variegated lamps swinging over his head. Again we catch a glimpse (too brief, alas!) of the lady with a green parasol in her hand, on the outside stage of the next show but one, who supports herself on one foot, on the back of a majestic horse, blotting-paper coloured and white; and once again our eyes open wide with wonder, and our hearts throb with emotion, as we deliver our card-board check into the very hands of the Harlequin himself, who, all glittering with spangles, and dazzling with many colours, deigns to give us a word of encouragement and commendation as we pass into the booth!

But what was this—even this—to the glories of the inside, where, amid the smell of saw-dust, and orange-peel, sweeter far than violets to youthful noses, the first play being over, the lovers united, the ghost appeased, the baron killed, and everything made comfortable and pleasant,—the pantomime itself began! What words can describe the deep gloom of the opening scene, where a crafty magician holding a young lady in bondage was discovered, studying an enchanted book to the soft music of a gong!—or in what terms can we express the thrill of ecstasy with which, his magic power opposed by superior art, we beheld the monster himself converted into Clown! What mattered it that the stage was three yards wide, and four deep? we never saw it. We had no eyes, ears, or corporeal senses, but for the pantomime. And when its short career was run, and the baron previously slaughtered, coming forward with his hand upon his heart, announced that for that favour Mr. Richardson returned his most sincere thanks, and the per-

just could equal the effects of the Baron's indignation and surprise, when the Clown, unexpectedly peeping from behind the curtain, requested the audience "not to believe it, for it was all gammon!" Who but a Clown could have called forth the roar of laughter that succeeded; and what witchery but a Clown's could have caused the junior usher himself to declare aloud, as he shook his sides and smote his knee in a moment of irrepressible joy, that that was the very best thing he had ever heard said!

We have lost that clown now;—he is still alive, though, for we saw him only the day before last Bartholomew Fair, eating a real saveloy, and we are sorry to say he had deserted to the illegitimate drama, for he was seated on one of "Clark's Circus" waggons:—we have lost that Clown and that pantomime, but our relish for the entertainment still remains unimpaired. Each successive Boxing-day finds us in the same state of high excitement and expectation. On that eventful day, when new pantomimes are played for the first time at the two great theatres, and at twenty or thirty of the little ones, we still gloat as formerly upon the bills which set forth tempting descriptions of the scenery in staring red and black letters, and still fall down upon our knees, with other men and boys, upon the pavement by shop-doors, to read them down to the very last line. Nay, we still peruse with all eagerness and avidity the exclusive accounts of the coming wonders in the theatrical newspapers of the Sunday before, and still believe them as devoutly as we did before twenty years' experience had shown us that they are always wrong.

With these feelings upon the subject of pantomimes, it is no matter of surprise that when we first heard that Grimaldi had left some memoirs of his life behind him, we were in a perfect

the newspapers,)—than we sat down at once and read the word.

See how pleasantly things come about, if you let them take their own course! This mention of the manuscript brings us at once to the very point we are anxious to reach, and which we should have gained long ago, if we had not travelled into those irrelevant remarks concerning pantomimic representations.

For about a year before his death, Grimaldi was employed in writing a full account of his life and adventures. It was his chief occupation and amusement; and as people who write their own lives, even in the midst of very many occupations, often find time to extend them to a most inordinate length, it is no wonder that his account of himself was exceedingly voluminous.

This manuscript was confided to Mr. Thomas Egerton Wilks: to alter and revise, with a view to its publication. Mr. Wilks, who was well acquainted with Grimaldi and his connexions, applied himself to the task of condensing it throughout, and wholly expunging considerable portions, which, so far as the public were concerned, possessed neither interest nor amusement, he likewise interspersed here and there the substance of such personal anecdotes as he had gleaned from the writer in desultory conversation. While he was thus engaged, Grimaldi died.

Mr. Wilks having by the commencement of September concluded his labours, offered the manuscript to the present publisher, by whom it was shortly afterwards purchased unconditionally, with the full consent and concurrence of Mr. Richard Hughes, Grimaldi's executor.

The present Editor of these Memoirs has felt it necessary to say thus much in explanation of their origin, in order to establish beyond doubt the unquestionable authenticity of the memoirs they contain.

struck by several incidents in the manuscript—such as the description of Grimaldi's infancy, the burglary, the brother's return from sea under the extraordinary circumstances detailed, the adventure of the man with the two fingers on his left hand, the account of Mackintosh and his friends, and many other passages,—and thinking that they might be related in a more attractive manner, (they were at that time told in the first person, as if by Grimaldi himself, although they had necessarily lost any original manner which his recital might have imparted to them;) he accepted a proposal from the publisher to edit the book, and *has* edited it to the best of his ability, altering its form throughout, and making such other alterations as he conceived would improve the narration of the facts, without any departure from the facts themselves.

He has merely to add, that there has been no *book-making* in this case. He has not swelled the quantity of matter, but materially abridged it. The account of Grimaldi's first courtship may appear lengthy in its present form; but it has undergone a double and most comprehensive process of abridgment. The old man was garrulous upon a subject on which the youth had felt so keenly; and as the feeling did him honour in both stages of life, the Editor has not had the heart to reduce it further.

Here is the book, then, at last. After so much pains from so many hands—including the good right hand of GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, which has seldom been better exercised,—he humbly hopes it may find favour with the public.

DOUGHTY STREET,

February, 1838.

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CHAPTER I.

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THE paternal grandfather of Joseph Grimaldi was well known, both to the French and Italian public, as an eminent dancer, possessing a most extraordinary degree of strength and agility, —qualities which, being brought into full play by the constant exercise of his frame in his professional duties, acquired for him the distinguishing appellation of "Iron Legs." Dibdin, in his *History of the Stage*, relates several anecdotes of his prowess in these respects, many of which are current elsewhere, though the authority on which they rest would appear from his grandson's testimony to be somewhat doubtful; the best known of these, however, is perfectly true. Jumping extremely high one night in some performance on the stage, possibly in a fit of enthusiasm occasioned by the august presence of the Turkish Ambassador, who, with his suite, occupied the stage-box, he

Ambassador aforesaid. The dignity of this great personage being much affronted, a formal complaint was made to the Court of France, who gravely commanded "Iron Legs" to apologize, which "Iron Legs" did in due form, to the great amusement of himself, and the court, and the public; and, in short, of everybody else but the exalted gentleman whose person had been grievously outraged. The mighty affair terminated in the appearance of a squib, which has been thus translated:—

Hail, Iron Legs! immortal pair,
Agile, firm knit, and peerless,
That skim the earth, or vault in air,
Aspiring high and fearless.
Glory of Paris! outdoing compeers,
Brave pair! may nothing hurt ye;
Scatter at will our chandeliers,
And tweak the nose of Turkey.
And should a too presumptuous foe
But dare these shores to land on,
His well-kicked men shall quickly know
We've Iron Legs to stand on.

This circumstance occurred on the French stage. The first Grimaldi* who appeared in England was the father of the sub-

* Giuseppe Grimaldi was really "Iron Legs;" of the grandfather no particulars are known. The father of our Joe was originally a pantomime actor at the fairs in Italy and France, at the time these fairs supplied the French Theatre with some of the finest dancers that have conferred distinction on that stage. His first employment in England was at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, where the lighter kind of ballet proving attractive, similar dances were introduced early in the season 1758, 1759, on the boards of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. At the former, under Garrick's management, a new pantomime dance, entitled "The Millers," was performed for the first time, October 12th, 1758; in which Signor Grimaldi, it was announced, made his first appearance on the English Stage. A writer in the "London Chronicle," in reference to this piece, observes, as regards the debutant—"Grimaldi is a man of great strength and agility; he indeed treads the air. If he has any fault, he is rather too comical; and from some feats of his performing, which I have been a witness to, at the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket, those spectators will see him. it is

ject of these Memoirs, and the son of "Iron Legs," who, holding the appointment of Dentist to Queen Charlotte, came to England in that capacity in 1760; he was a native of Genoa, and long before his arrival in this country had attained considerable distinction in his profession. We have not many instances of the union of the two professions of dentist and dancing-master; but Grimaldi, possessing a taste for both pursuits, and a much higher relish for the latter than the former, obtained leave to resign his situation about the Queen, soon after his arrival in this country, and commenced giving lessons in dancing and fencing, occasionally giving his pupils a taste of his quality in

neck, or not." In reference to the dance of "The Millers," composed by Grimaldi, then deemed an innovation, he continues:—

"Some people hold dancing to be below the dignity of a regular theatre; but I can by no means subscribe to their opinion, since one of the principal ends of every theatre, is to delight; and everything that can contribute to that purpose, under proper restrictions, has an undoubted right to a place there. I shall not affect to show my learning, by adding, the ancients not only admitted dancing, but thought it a necessary ornament in the performance of the most celebrated tragedies.

"The French in this kind of merit, for many years carried all before them; but of late the Italians seem to have the start of them; and it must be allowed, the latter are much better actors, which, in the comic dance that now almost everywhere prevails, is infinitely more requisite, than those graceful postures and movements on which the French dancers for the most part pique themselves; but in this case a vast deal depends on the Maître de Ballet; and whoever composed 'The Millers,' has, I think, shown himself a man of genius; the figure of the contra-danse being pleasingly intricate, and the whole admirably well adapted to the music. I cannot, however, help observing, he has been indebted to Don Quixote; for when Signor Grimaldi comes in asleep on his ass, it is stolen from under him in the same manner that Gines de Passamont robs poor Sancho of his, and the same joy is testified by both parties in the recovery of the beloved brute."

The Drury Lane play-bill, October 10, 1761, announced as "not acted this season," a Comedy called the Confederacy; Brass, Mr. King; Flippanta, Mrs. Clive. At the end of Act II. an entertainment of Dancing, called the Italian

kept Mr. Grimaldi in pretty constant occupation. In many scattered notices of OUR Grimaldi's life, it has been stated that the father lost his situation at court in consequence of the rudeness of his behaviour, and some disrespect which he had shown the King; an accusation which his son always took very much to heart, and which the continual patronage of the King and Queen, bestowed upon him publicly, on all possible occasions, sufficiently proves to be unfounded.

paid during the whole season, but for certain periods; in the interim they were employed, under certain restrictions, at other places of amusement. Those belonging to Drury Lane, in Garrick's time, were in the summer months, and from Easter to Michaelmas attached to Sadler's Wells; and in the bills which announced the opening of that suburban theatre, at Easter, 1763 and 1764, Signor Grimaldi appears as Maitre de Ballet, and chief dancer. On May 1, in the latter year, Grimaldi, and an English dancer named Aldridge, of considerable eminence in his profession, jointly had a benefit; Shakspeare's "Tempest" was performed, as also the pantomime of "Fortunatus," Harlequin by Signor Grimaldi. In the September of the same year, at Sadler's Wells, the Signor had another benefit; the bill of the evening is subjoined:

FOR THE BENEFIT OF SIGNOR GRIMALDI.

AT SADLER'S WELLS, ISLINGTON.

On Wednesday, September 19, 1764, will be exhibited a Variety of New Performances.

Dancing both serious and comic, viz.:—1. "The Miller's Dance," by Signor Duval, Signor Amoire, Signora Mercucius, Mrs. Preston, and others.—2. "The Shoemakers," by Signor Grimaldi, Signor Amoire, Miss Wilkinson, and others.—3. "The Country Wedding," by Signor Duval, Signor Amoire, Signora Mercucius, Miss Wilkinson, and Signor Grimaldi, and others.

And by particular desire, for that night only,

A Double Hornpipe by Master Cape and Miss Taylor.

Tumbling by Mr. Sturgess, Signor Pedro, and Mr. Garman.

Singing by Mr. Prentice, Mr. Cooke, and Miss Brown.

With a variety of Curious Performances by

THE VENETIAN AND HIS CHILDREN.

The Wire by Master Wilkinson.

The Musical Glasses by Miss Wilkinson.

appointed ballet-master of old Drury Lane Theatre and Sadler's Wells, with which he coupled the situation of primo buffo; in this double capacity he became a very great favourite with the public, and their majesties, who were nearly every week accustomed to command some pantomime of which Grimaldi was the hero. He bore the reputation of being a very honest man, and a very charitable one, never turning a deaf ear to the entreaties of the distressed, but always willing, by every means in his power, to relieve the numerous reduced and wretched persons who applied to him for assistance. It may be added—and his son always mentioned it with just pride—that he was never

The whole to conclude with a New Entertainment of Music and Dancing, called

DON QUIXOTE.

Harlequin	Mr. Banks.
Don Quixote, Mr. Niepeker	Sancho, Mr. Warner.
Columbine	Miss Wilkinson.

The Paintings, Music, and Habits, are all entirely New.

Pit and Boxes, 2s. 6d.

Gallery, 1s. 6d.

To begin exactly at Six.]

[Vivant Rex et Regina.]

Tickets and Places to be had of Signor Grimaldi, at the New Tunbridge Wells; and he begs the favour of those Ladies and Gentlemen, who have already taken Places, to send their servants by Half-an-Hour after Four o'clock.

At Drury Lane, December 26, in the same year, was performed the Tragedy of "The Earl of Essex;" at the end of Act IV. a Dance called "The Irish Lilt," by Mr. Aldridge, Miss Baker, and others. After which, not performed these three years, an Entertainment in Italian Grotesque Characters, called "Queen Mab." Harlequin, by Mr. Rooker; Pantaloon, by Signor Grimaldi; Silvio, by Mr. Baddeley; Puck, Master Cape; Queen Mab, by Miss Ford; Columbine, by Miss Baker. The facetious Ned Rooker, principal Harlequin at Drury Lane, was a painter of great excellence: his paintings and drawings are still held in high repute, and his theatrical scenery was not surpassed in his time; some of it was in use till recently at the Haymarket Theatre.

He appears to have been a very singular and eccentric man. It would be difficult to account for the little traits of his character which are developed in the earlier pages of this book, unless this circumstance were borne in mind. He purchased a small quantity of ground at Lambeth once, part of which was laid out as a garden; he entered into possession of it in the very depth of a most inclement winter, but he was so impatient to ascertain how this garden would look in full bloom, that, finding it quite impossible to wait till the coming of spring and summer gradually developed its beauties, he had it at once decorated with an immense quantity of artificial flowers, and the branches of all the trees bent beneath the weight of the most luxuriant foliage, and the most abundant crops of fruit, all, it is needless to say, artificial also.

A singular trait in this individual's character, was a vague and profound dread of the 14th day of the month. At its approach he was always nervous, disquieted, and anxious: directly it had passed he was another man again, and invariably exclaimed, in his broken English, "Ah! now I am safe for another month." If this circumstance were unaccompanied by any singular coincidence it would be scarcely worth mentioning; but it is remarkable that he actually died on the 14th day of March; and that he was born, christened, and married on the 14th of the month.

There are other anecdotes of the same kind told of Henri Quatre, and others; this one is undoubtedly true, and it may be added to the list of coincidences or presentiments, or by whatever name the reader pleases to call them, as a veracious and well-authenticated instance.

These are not the only odd characteristics of the man. He was a most morbidly sensitive and melancholy being, and enter-

habit of wandering about churchyards and burying-places, for hours together, and would speculate on the diseases of which the persons whose remains occupied the graves he walked among, had died; figure their death-beds, and wonder how many of them had been buried alive in a fit or a trance: a possibility which he shuddered to think of, and which haunted him both through life and at its close. Such an effect had this fear upon his mind, that he left express directions in his will that, before his coffin should be fastened down, his head should be severed from his body, and the operation was actually performed in the presence of several persons.

It is a curious circumstance, that death, which always filled his mind with the most gloomy and horrible reflections, and which in his unoccupied moments can hardly be said to have been ever absent from his thoughts, should have been chosen by him as the subject of one of his most popular scenes in the pantomimes of the time. Among many others of the same nature, he invented the well-known skeleton scene for the clown, which was very popular in those days, and is still occasionally represented. Whether it be true, that the hypochondriac is most prone to laugh at the things which most annoy and terrify him in private, as a man who believes in the appearance of spirits upon earth is always the foremost to express his unbelief; or whether these gloomy ideas haunted the unfortunate man's mind so much, that even his merriment assumed a ghastly hue, and his comicality sought for grotesque objects in the grave and the charnel-house, the fact is equally remarkable.

This was the same man who, in the time of Lord George Gordon's riots, when people, for the purpose of protecting their houses from the fury of the mob, inscribed upon their doors the

or because the rioters did not happen to go down that particular street, we are unable to determine.

On the 18th of December, 1779, the year in which Garrick died, Joseph Grimaldi, "Old Joe," was born, in Stanhope-street, † Clare-market; a part of the town then as now, much frequented by theatrical people, in consequence of its vicinity to the theatres. At the period of his birth, his eccentric father was sixty-five years old, and twenty-five months afterwards another son was born to him—Joseph's only brother.

The child did not remain very long in a state of helpless and unprofitable infancy, for at the age of one year and eleven months he was brought out by his father on the boards of Old

* Henry Angelo, in his *Reminiscences*, gives a different version of this story. "The father of Grimaldi, for many years the favourite clown, was my dancing-master when I was a boy, and encouraged my harlequin and monkey tricks; he related the anecdote to me, himself, and I am therefore justified in repeating it. At the time of the riots, in June, 1780, he resided in a front room, on the second floor in Holborn, on the same side of the way near to Red Lion Square, when the mob passing by the house, and Grimaldi being a foreigner, they thought he must be a papist. On hearing he lived there, they all stopped, and there was a general shouting; a cry of 'No Popery!' was raised, and they were about to assail the house, when Grimaldi, who had been listening all the time, and knew their motives, put his head out of the window from the second floor, and making comical grimaces, called out, 'Genteelmen, in dis hose dere be no religion at all.' Laughing at their mistake, the mob proceeded on, first giving him three huzzas, though his house, unlike all the others, had not written on the door—'No Popery!'"

† Joe, from some erroneous information he had received, always stated he was born in Stanhope-street, Clare-market, December 18, 1779; he mentioned this in his farewell address at Sadler's Wells, and again subscribed that date at the end of his autobiographical notes. He was in error: a reference to the baptismal register of St. Clement's Danes, proved he was born on December 18, 1778, and that he was baptized as the son of Joseph and Rebecca, on the 28th of the same month and year. From this entry, it might be inferred that Joe was legitimate; but we are sorry to be compelled to record that he was not so. Rebecca was Mrs. Brooker, who had been from her infancy a dancer at Drury Lane, and subsequently, at Sadler's Wells, played old women, or anything to

piece in which his precocious powers were displayed was the well-known pantomime of Robinson Crusoe, in which the father sustained the part of the Shipwrecked Mariner, and the son performed that of the Little Clown. The child's success was complete; he was instantly placed on the establishment, accorded a magnificent weekly salary of fifteen shillings, and every succeeding year was brought forward in some new and prominent part. He became a favourite behind the curtain as well as before it, being henceforth distinguished in the green-room as "Clever little Joe;" and Joe he was called to the last day of his life.

In 1782, he first appeared at Sadler's Wells, in the arduous character of a monkey; and here he was fortunate enough to excite as much approbation, as he had previously elicited in

her, describe her as having been a short, stout, very dark woman. The same baptismal register from 1773 to 1789, has been carefully inspected, but no mention occurs of Joe's only brother, John Baptist, or of any other of the Grimaldi family.

* Joe's first appearance was at Sadler's Wells, not at Drury Lane; the announcement bill for the opening on April 16, Easter Monday, 1781, of the former theatre, tells us of Dancing by Mr. Le Mercier, Mr. Languish, Master and Miss Grimaldi, and Mrs. Sutton. Here we see Joe, and his sister Mary, afterwards Mrs. Williamson, thrust forward sufficiently early to earn their bread. Grimaldi, in his farewell address, on his last appearance at Sadler's Wells, pathetically alluded to this fact—"at a very early age, before that of three years, I was introduced to the public, by my father, at this theatre."

That Joe did not play the "Little Clown" in Sheridan's Pantomime of "Robinson Crusoe," is evident from the construction of the drama. On January 29, 1781, after the "Winter's Tale," Florizel, Mr. Brereton; Perdita, Mrs. Brereton, afterwards Mrs. J. P. Kemble; and Hermione, Miss Farren; was performed, for the first time, "Robinson Crusoe; or, Harlequin Friday." The bill of the night lets us know, that the principal characters were by Mr. Wright, Mr. Grimaldi, Mr. Delpini, Mr. Suett, Mr. Gaudry, and Miss Collett. This pantomime was performed thirty-eight times that season. Grimaldi played Friday, not the "Shipwrecked Mariner;" and the probability is, that young Joe made

the part of a clown at this theatre, as he had done at the other; and here he remained (one season only excepted) until the termination of his professional life, forty-nine years afterwards.

Now that he had made, or rather that his father had made for him, two engagements, by which he was bound to appear at two theatres on the same evening, and at very nearly the same time, his labours began in earnest. They would have been arduous for a man, much more so for a child; and it will be obvious, that if at any one portion of his life his gains were very great, the actual toil both of mind and body by which they were purchased was at least equally so. The stage-stricken young gentlemen who hang about Sadler's Wells, and Astleys, and the Surrey, and private theatres of all kinds, and who long to embrace the theatrical profession because it is "so easy," little dream of all the anxieties and hardships, and privations and sorrows, which make the sum of most actors' lives.

We have already remarked that the father of Grimaldi was an eccentric man; he appears to have been peculiarly eccentric, and rather unpleasantly so, in the correction of his son. The child being bred up to play all kinds of fantastic tricks, was as much a clown, a monkey, or anything else that was droll and ridiculous, off the stage, as on it; and being incited thereto by the occupants of the green-room, used to skip and tumble about as much for their diversion as that of the public. All this was carefully concealed from the father, who, whenever he did happen to observe any of the child's pranks, always administered the same punishment—a sound thrashing; terminating in his being lifted up by the hair of the head, and stuck in a corner, whence his father, with a severe countenance and awful

afterwards became so popular, he would recommence his pantomime with greater vigour than ever; indeed, nothing could ever stop him but the cry of "Joe! Joe! here's your father!" upon which the boy would dart back into the old corner, and begin crying again as if he had never left off.

This became quite a regular amusement in course of time, and whether the father was coming or not, the caution used to be given for the mere pleasure of seeing "Joe" run back to his corner; this "Joe" very soon discovered, and often confounding the warning with the joke, received more severe beatings than before, from him whom he very properly describes in his manuscript as his "severe but excellent parent." On one of these occasions, when he was dressed for his favourite part of the little clown in Robinson Crusoe, with his face painted in exact imitation of his father's, which appears to have been part of the fun of the scene, the old gentleman brought him into the green-room, and placing him in his usual solitary corner, gave him strict directions not to stir an inch, on pain of being thrashed, and left him.

The Earl of Dorby, who was at that time in the constant habit of frequenting the green-room, happened to walk in at the moment, and seeing a lonesome-looking little boy dressed and painted after a manner very inconsistent with his solitary air, good-naturedly called him towards him.

"Hollo! here, my boy, come here!" said the Earl.

Joe made a wonderful and astonishing face, but remained where he was. The Earl laughed heartily, and looked round for an explanation.

"He dare not move!" explained Miss Farren, to whom his lordship was then much attached, and whom he afterwards

With this, he held up half-a-crown, and the child, perfectly well knowing the value of money, darted from his corner, seized it with pantomimic suddenness, and was darting back again, when the Earl caught him by the arm.

"Here, Joe!" said the Earl, "take off your wig and throw it in the fire, and here's another half-crown for you."

No sooner said than done. Off came the wig,—into the fire it went; a roar of laughter arose; the child capered about with a half-crown in each hand; the Earl, alarmed for the consequences to the boy, busied himself to extricate the wig with the tongs and poker; and the father, in full dress for the Shipwrecked Mariner, rushed into the room at the same moment. It was lucky for "Little Joe" that Lord Derby promptly and humanely interfered, or it is exceedingly probable that his father would have prevented any chance of *his* being buried alive at all events, by killing him outright.

As it was, the matter could not be compromised without his receiving a smart beating, which made him cry very bitterly; and the tears running down his face, which was painted "an inch thick," came to the "complexion at last," in parts, and made him look as much like a little clown as like a little human being, to neither of which characters he bore the most distant resemblance. He was "called" almost immediately afterwards, and the father being in a violent rage, had not noticed the circumstance until the little object came on the stage, when a general roar of laughter directed his attention to his grotesque countenance. Becoming more violent than before, he fell upon him at once, and beat him severely, and the child roared vociferously. This was all taken by the audience as a most capital joke; shouts of laughter and peals of applause shook the house; and the newspapers next morning declared that it was perfectly wonderful.

actor's life. The jest on the lip, and the tear in the eye, the merriment on the mouth, and the aching of the heart, have called down the same shouts of laughter and peals of applause a hundred times. Characters in a state of starvation are almost invariably laughed at upon the stage;—the audience have had their dinner.

The bitterest portion of the boy's punishment was the being deprived of the five shillings, which the excellent parent put into his own pocket, possibly because he received the child's salary also, and in order that everything might be, as Goldsmith's Bear-leader has it, "in a concatenation accordingly." The Earl gave him half-a-crown every time he saw him afterwards though, and the child had good cause for regret when his lordship married Miss Farren,* and left the green-room.

At Sadler's Wells he became a favourite almost as speedily as at Drury Lane. King, the comedian,† who was principal pro-

* Miss Farren, previously to her marriage with the Earl of Derby, took her final leave of the stage, as Lady Teazle, in "The School for Scandal," April 8, 1797.

† Tom King was the manager of Sadler's Wells Theatre from Easter, 1772, till the close of the season, 1782; when, on Sheridan's resignation as manager of Drury Lane, King succeeded him in September, 1782, and relinquished the management of Sadler's Wells to Wroughton, whose term commenced at Easter, 1783. We have already explained that *Joc's* father was not employed at Sadler's Wells in 1781; and yet, perhaps in consideration of Master and Miss, Signor Grimaldi had a benefit at that theatre, on Thursday, September 12, 1782; the usual diversions were announced, but he did not take any part in the business of the evening. The bills announced, "Tickets and Places to be had only of Mr. Grimaldi, at No. 5, Princes Street, Drury Lane, and opposite Sadler's Wells Gate." Signor Placido's night followed on Monday, September 10, when, with other new amusements, was introduced "A new Pantomime Dance, for the first time, called "The Woodcutter; or, the Lucky Mischance," characters by Mr. Dupuis, then principal dancer at the Wells, Mr. Meunier, Mr. Grimaldi, Mrs. Sutton, Signor Placido, and the Little Devil, being their first Pantomimical performance in this kingdom." This was the only appearance of Signor Grimaldi at the Wells in 1782; for which, possibly, he was paid by Placido.

Young *Joc's* introduction to Sadler's Wells, in 1781, as also the benefit here

noticed, in 1782, were kindnesses probably rendered to Grimaldi by Tom King, during the last two years of his management.

Reynolds, the dramatist, was wont to relate a droll story of the Signor, which may not improperly be told here. "Walking one day in Pall Mall with Tom King, we met the celebrated clown, Grimaldi, father of Joe Grimaldi, approaching us with a face of the most ludicrous astonishment and delight, when he exclaimed: 'Oh, vatt a clevare fellow dat Sheridan is!—shall I tell you?—oui—yes; I vill, bien donc. I could no nevare see him at de theatre, so je vais chez lui, to his house in Hertford-street, muffled in de great coat, and I say, 'Domestique!—you hear?' 'Yes, Sare.' 'Vell, den, tell your master, dat Mistare—you know, de Mayor of Stafford be below.' Domestique fly; and on de instant I vas shown into de drawing-room. In von more minuet, Sheridan leave his dinner party, enter de room hastily—stop suddenly, and say, 'How dare you, Grim, play me such a trick?' Then putting himself into von grand passion, he go on: 'Go, Sare!—get out of my house!' 'Begar,' say I, placing my back against de door, 'not till you pay me my forty pounds;' and then I point to de pen, ink, and paper, on von small tables in de corner, and say, 'Dere, write me de check, and de Mayor shall go vitement—entendez-vous? If not, morbleu! I shall—'

"'Oh!' interrupted dis clevare man, 'if I must, Grim, I must,' and as if he vare très-pressé—vary hurry, he write de draft, and pushing it into my hand, he squeeze it, and I do push it into my pocket. Eh bien!—vell, den, I do make haste to de banquier, and giving it to de clerks, I say, vitement, 'four tens, if you please, Sare. 'Four tens!' he say, with much surprise; 'de draft be only for four pounds!' O, vat a clevare fellow dat Sheridan is! Vell, den, I say, 'If you please, Sare, donnez-moi donc, dose four pounds.' And den he say, 'Call again to-morrow.' Next day, I meet de manager in de street, and I say, 'Mistare Sheridan! have you forget?' and den he laugh, and say, 'Vy, Grim, I recollected afterwards—I left out de 0!' O, vat a clevare fellow dat Sheridan is!"

Again meeting Grimaldi, some months afterwards, Reynolds asked him, whether the manager had found means to pay him the amount of his dishonoured cheque. He replied in the affirmative; but with a look and tone of voice so altered, it seemed as if the successful adroitness of Sheridan's *ruse contre ruse*, had afforded him more enjoyment, and given him a higher opinion of the manager as "a clevare fellow," than the mere passing business affair of paying him his demand.



him in such cases, might have prevented his subsequent appearance on any stage. He played a monkey, and had to accompany the clown (his father) throughout the piece. In one of the scenes, the clown used to lead him on by a chain attached to his waist, and with this chain he would swing him round and round, at arm's length, with the utmost velocity. One evening, when this feat was in the act of performance, the chain broke, and he was hurled a considerable distance into the pit, fortunately without sustaining the slightest injury; for he was flung by a miracle into the very arms of an old gentleman who was sitting gazing at the stage with intense interest.

Among the many persons who in this early stage of his career behaved with great kindness to him, were the famous rope-dancers, Mr. and Mrs. Redigé, then called *Le Petit Diable*,* and *La Belle Espagnole*; who often gave him a guinea to buy some childish luxury, which his father invariably took away and deposited in a box, with his name written outside, which he would lock very carefully, and then, giving the boy the key, say, "Mind, Joe, ven I die, dat is your vortune." Eventually he lost both the box and the fortune, as will hereafter appear.

As he had now nearly four months vacant out of every twelve, the run of the Christmas pantomime at Drury Lane seldom exceeding a month, and Sadler's Wells not opening until Easter,

* Paulo Redigé, "*Le Petit Diable*," made his first appearance at Sadler's Wells with Placido, the "*French Voltigeur*," under the Italianised name of Signor Placido, on Easter Monday, 1781, on the same night with young Joe. *La Belle Espagnole*, whom Angelo describes as "a very beautiful woman," made her first appearance at the same theatre, on April 1, 1785; having, as the bills expressed it, "been celebrated at Paris all the winter, for her very elegant and wonderful performances." She soon after became the wife of the "*Little Devil*."

Wells without the pit effect. As the piece was withdrawn at the end of a month, and he had nothing to do for the remainder of the season, he again repaired to Putney.

In Christmas 1783, he once more appeared at Drury Lane, in a pantomime called "Hurly Burly."* In this piece he had to represent, not only the old part of the monkey, but that of a cat besides; and in sustaining the latter character he met with an accident, his speedy recovery from which would almost induce one to believe that he had so completely identified himself with the character as to have eight additional chances for his life. The dress he wore was so clumsily contrived, that when it was sewn upon him he could not see before him; consequently, as he was running about the stage, he fell down a trap-door, which had been left open to represent a well, and tumbled down a distance of forty feet, thereby breaking his collar-bone, and inflicting several contusions upon his body. He was immediately conveyed home, and placed under the care of a surgeon, but he did not recover soon enough to appear any more that season at Drury Lane, although at Easter he performed at Sadler's Wells as usual.

In the summer of this year, he used to be allowed, as a mark of high and special favour, to spend every alternate Sunday at the house of his mother's father, "who," says Grimaldi himself, "resided in Newton-street, Holborn, and was a carcase butcher, doing a prodigious business; besides which, he kept the Bloomsbury slaughter-house, and, at the time of his death, had done so for more than sixty years." With this grandfather, "Joe" was a great favourite; and as he was very much indulged and petted when he went to see him, he used to look forward to

* A pantomimical olio, entitled "The Geldrop," in which Grimaldi played

upon these occasions, and, after great deliberation, and much consultation with tailors, the "little clown" was attired for one of these Sunday excursions in the following style. On his back he wore a green coat, embroidered with almost as many artificial flowers as his father had put in the garden at Lambeth; beneath this there shone a satin waistcoat of dazzling whiteness; and beneath that again were a pair of green cloth breeches (the word existed in those days) richly embroidered. His legs were fitted into white silk stockings, and his feet into shoes with brilliant paste buckles, of which he also wore another resplendent pair at his knees: he had a laced shirt, cravat, and ruffles; a cocked-hat upon his head; a small watch set with diamonds—theatrical, we suppose—in his fob; and a little cane in his hand, which he switched to and fro as our clowns may do now.

Being thus thoroughly equipped for starting, he was taken in for his father's inspection: the old gentleman was pleased to signify his entire approbation with his appearance, and, after kissing him in the moment of his gratification, demanded the key of the "fortune-box." The key being got with some difficulty out of one of the pockets of the green smalls, the bottom of which might be somewhere near the buckles, the old gentleman took a guinea out of the box, and, putting it into the boy's pocket, said, "Dere now, you are a gentleman, and something more—you have got a guinea in your pocket." The box having been carefully locked, and the key returned to the owner of the "fortune," off he started, receiving strict injunctions to be home by eight o'clock. The father would not allow anybody to attend him, on the ground that he was a gentleman, and consequently perfectly able to take care of himself; so away he went, to walk all the way from Little Russel-street, Drury-lane, to Newton-street, Holborn.



The child's appearance in the street excited considerable curiosity, as the appearance of any other child, alone, in such a costume, might very probably have done ; but he was a public character besides, and the astonishment was proportionate. "Hollo !" cried one boy, "here's 'Little Joe !'" "Get along," said another, "it's the monkey." A third, thought it was the "bear dressed for a dance ;" and the fourth suggested "it might be the cat going out to a party," while the more sedate passengers could not help laughing heartily, and saying how ridiculous it was to trust such a child in the streets alone. However, he walked on, with various singular grimaces, until he stopped to look at a female of miserable appearance, who was reclining on the pavement, and whose diseased and destitute aspect had already collected a crowd. The boy stopped, like others, and hearing her tale of distress, became so touched, that he thrust his hand into his pocket, and having at last found the bottom of it, pulled out his guinea, which was the only coin he had, and slipped it into her hand ; then away he walked again with a greater air than before.

The sight of the embroidered coat, and breeches, and the paste buckles, and the satin waistcoat and cocked-hat, had astonished the crowd not a little in the outset ; but directly it was understood that the small owner of these articles had given the woman a guinea, a great number of people collected around him, and began shouting and staring by turns most earnestly. The boy, not at all abashed, headed the crowd, and walked on very deliberately, with a train a street or two long behind him, until he fortunately encountered a friend of his father's, who no sooner saw the concourse that attended him, than he took him in his arms and carried him, despite a few kicks and strug-

appointed time, kissed him, extolled him for paying such strict attention to his instructions, examined his dress, discovered satisfactorily that no injury had been done to his clothes, and concluded by asking for the key of the "fortune-box," and the guinea. The boy, at first, quite forgot the morning adventure; but, after rummaging his pockets for the guinea, and not finding it, he recollected what had occurred, and, falling upon the knees of the knee-smalls, confessed it all, and implored forgiveness.

The father was puzzled; he was always giving away money in charity himself, and he could scarcely reprimand the child for doing the same. He looked at him for some seconds with a perplexed countenance, and then, contenting himself with simply saying, "I'll beat you," sent him to bed.

Among the eccentricities of the old gentleman, one—certainly not his most amiable one—was, that whatever he promised he performed; and that when, as in this case, he promised to thrash the boy, he would very coolly let the matter stand over for months, but never forget it in the end. This was ingenious, inasmuch as it doubled, or trebled, or quadrupled the punishment, giving the unhappy little victim all the additional pain of anticipating it for a long time, with the certainty of enduring it in the end. Four or five months after this occurrence, and when the child had not given his father any new cause of offence, he suddenly called him to him one day, and communicated the intelligence that he was going to beat him forthwith. Hereupon the boy began to cry most piteously, and faltered forth the inquiry, "Oh! father, what for!"—"Remember the guinea!" said the father. And he gave him a caning which he remembered to the last day of his life.

and a man of colour who acted as footman, and was dignified with the appellation of "Black Sam."

The father was extremely hospitable, and fond of company; he rarely dined alone, and on certain gala days, of which Christmas-eve was one, had a very large party, upon which occasions his really splendid service of plate, together with various costly articles of *bijouterie*, were laid out for the admiration of the guests. Upon one Christmas-eve, when the dining-parlour was decorated and prepared with all due gorgeousness and splendour, the two boys, accompanied by Black Sam, stole into it, and began to pass various encomiums on its beautiful appearance.

"Ah!" said Sam, in reply to some remark of the brothers, "and when old Massa die, all dese fine things vill be yours."

Both the boys were much struck with this remark, and especially John, the younger, who, being extremely young, probably thought much less about death than his father, and accordingly exclaimed, without the least reserve or delicacy, that he should be exceedingly glad if all these fine things were his.

Nothing more was said upon the subject. Black Sam went to his work, the boys commenced a game of play, and nobody thought any more of the matter except the father himself, who, passing the door of the room at the moment the remarks were made, distinctly heard them. He pondered over the matter for some days, and at length, with the view of ascertaining the dispositions of his two sons, formed a singular resolution, still connected with the topic ever upwards in his mind, and determined to feign himself dead. He caused himself to be laid out in the drawing-room, covered with a sheet, and had the room

for a considerable period of the year.

At Sadler's Wells, where Joseph appeared as usual in 1788,* shortly after his father's death, they were not so liberal, nor was the aspect of things so pleasing, his salary of fifteen shillings a-week being very unceremoniously cut down to three, and his mother being politely informed, upon her remonstrating, that if the alteration did not suit her, he was at perfect liberty to transfer his valuable services to any other house. Small as the pittance was, they could not afford to refuse it; and at that salary he remained at Sadler's Wells for three years, occasionally superintending the property-room, sometimes assisting in the carpenter's, and sometimes in the painter's, and, in fact, lending a hand wherever it was most needed.

When the defalcation of the executor took place, the family

* The season of 1788, at Sadler's Wells, was one of no common interest. On Whitsun Monday, May 12, in a musical piece, entitled "Saint Monday; or, a Cure for a Scold," Mr. Braham, then Master Abrahams, made his first appearance. He is named in the bills of August 18, but appears soon after to have left Sadler's Wells, and on the 30th of the same month had a benefit at the Royalty Theatre, Well-street, near Goodman's-fields, as "Master Braham," when the celebrated tenor singer, Leoni, his master, announced that as the last time of his performing on the stage. Miss Shields, who appeared at Sadler's Wells in the same piece on Whitsun Monday, became towards the end of May, Mrs. Löffler. Two Frenchmen, named Duranie and Bois-Maison, as pantomimists, eclipsed all their predecessors on that stage. Boyce, a distinguished engraver, was the Harlequin, and by those who remember him, he is eulogised as the most finished actor of the motley hero, either in his own day, or since. On the benefit night of Joseph Dortor, Clown to the rope, and Richer, the rope dancer, Miss Richer made her first appearance on two slack wires, passing through a hoop, with a pyramid of glasses on her head; and Master Richer performed on the tight rope, with a skipping rope. Joseph Dortor, among other almost incredible feats, drank a glass of wine backwards from the stage-floor, beating a drum at the same time. Lawrence, the father of Joe's friend, Richard Lawrence, threw a summerset over twelve men's heads, and Paul Redigé, "The Little Devil," on October 1, threw a summerset over two men on horseback, the riders having each a lighted candle on his head. Dubois, as Clown to the Pantomime, had no superior in his time; and the troop of Voltigeurs were pre-eminent for their

were compelled to give up their comfortable establishment, and to seek for lodgings of an inferior description. His mother knowing a Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, who then resided in Great Wild-street, and who let lodgings, applied to them, and there they lived, in three rooms on the first floor, for several years. The brother could not be prevailed upon to accept any regular engagement, for he thought and dreamt of nothing but going to sea, and evinced the utmost detestation of the stage. Sometimes, when boys were wanted in the play at Drury Lane, he was sent for, and attended, for which he received a shilling per night ; but so great was his unwillingness and evident dissatisfaction on such occasions, that Mr. Wroughton, the comedian, who, by purchasing the property of Mr. King, became about this period* proprietor of Sadler's Wells, stepped forward in the boy's behalf, and obtained for him a situation on board an East-Indiaman, which then lay in the river, and was about to sail almost immediately.

John was delighted when the prospect of realizing his ardent wishes opened upon him so suddenly ; but his raptures were diminished by the discovery that an outfit was indispensable, and that it would cost upwards of fifty pounds : a sum which, it is scarcely necessary to say, his friends, in their reduced position, could not command. But the same kind-hearted gentleman removed this obstacle, and with a generosity and readiness which enhanced the value of the gift an hundredfold, advanced, without security or obligation, the whole sum required, merely saying, " Mind, John, when you come to be a captain you must pay it me back again."

There is no difficulty in providing the necessaries for a voyage to any part of the world when you have provided the first and

upon which Mr. Darcy, in his partnership as a furrier, in which pursuit, by industry and perseverance, he became eminently successful.

This circumstance would be scarcely worth mentioning, but that it shows the industry and perseverance of Grimaldi, and the ease with which, by the exercise of those qualities, a very young person may overcome all the disadvantages and temptations incidental to the most precarious walk of a precarious pursuit, and become a useful and respectable member of society. He earned many a guinea from Mr. Fairbrother by working at his trade, and availing himself of his instruction in his leisure hours; and when he could do nothing in that way, he would go to Newton-street, and assist his uncle and cousin, the carcase butchers, for nothing; such was his unconquerable antipathy to being idle. He does not inform us, whether it required a practical knowledge of trade, to display that skill and address with which, in his subsequent prosperity, he would diminish the joints of his customers as a baker, or increase the weight of their meat as a butcher, but we hope, for the credit of trade, that his morals in this respect were wholly imaginary.

These were his moments of occupation, but he contrived to find moments of amusement besides, which were devoted to the breeding of pigeons, and collecting of insects, which latter amusement he pursued with such success, as to form a cabinet containing no fewer than 4000 specimens of flies, "collected," he says, "at the expense of a great deal of time, a great deal of money, and a great deal of vast and actual labour,"—for all of which, no doubt, the entomologist will deem him sufficiently rewarded. He appears in old age to have entertained a peculiar relish for the recollection of these pursuits, and calls to mind a part of Surrey where there was a very famous fly, and a part of

called the Camberwell Beauty (which he adds was very ugly), and another, the Dartford Blue, by which Dartford Blue he seems to have set great store; and which were pursued and caught in the manner following, in June, 1794, when they regularly make their first appearance for the season.

Being engaged nightly at Sadler's Wells, he was obliged to wait till he had finished his business upon the stage: then he returned home, had supper, and shortly after midnight started off to walk to Dartford, fifteen miles from town. Here he arrived about five o'clock in the morning, and calling upon a friend of the name of Brooks, who lived in the neighbourhood, and who was already stirring, he rested, breakfasted, and sallied forth into the fields. His search was not very profitable, however, for after some hours he only succeeded in bagging, or bottling, one "Dartford Blue," with which he returned to his friend perfectly satisfied. At one o'clock he bade his friend good by, walked back to town, reached London by five, washed, took tea, and hurried to Sadler's Wells. No time was to be lost—the fact of the appearance of the "Dartford Blues" having been thoroughly established—in securing more specimens; so on the same night, directly the pantomime was over, and supper over, too, off he walked down to Dartford again, found the friend up again, took a hasty breakfast again, and resumed his search again. Meeting with better sport, and capturing no fewer than four dozen Dartford Blues, he hurried back to the friend's; set them—an important process, which consists in placing the insects in the position in which their natural beauty can be best displayed—started off with the Dartford Blues in his pocket for London once more, reached home by four o'clock in the afternoon, washed, and took a hasty meal, and then went to the theatre for

foreseen circumstance, the pantomime was to be played first. By this means he was enabled to leave London at nine o'clock, to reach Dartford at one, to find a bed and supper ready, to meet a kind reception from his friend, and finally to turn into bed, a little tired with the two days' exertions. The next day was Sunday, so that he could indulge himself without being obliged to return to town, and in the morning he caught more flies than he wanted; so the rest of the day was devoted to quiet sociality. He went to bed at ten o'clock, rose early next morning, walked comfortably to town, and at noon was perfect in his part, at the rehearsal on the stage at Drury Lane theatre.

It is probable that by such means as these, united to temperance and sobriety, Grimaldi acquired many important bodily requisites for the perfection which he afterwards attained. But his love of entomology, or exercise, was not the only inducement in the case of the Dartford Blues; he had, he says, another strong motive, and this was, the having promised a little collection of insects to "one of the most charming women of her age,"—the lamented Mrs. Jordan, at that time a member of the Drury Lane company.

Upon one occasion he had held under his arm, during a morning rehearsal, a box containing some specimens of flies: Mrs. Jordan was much interested to know what could possibly be in the box that Grimaldi carried about with him with so much care, and would not lose sight of for an instant, and in reply to her inquiry whether it contained anything pretty, he replied by exhibiting the flies.

He does not say whether these particular flies, which Mrs. Jordan admired, were Dartford Blues, or not; but he gives us to understand that his skill in preserving and arranging

Jordan, on the first day of the new season, and immediately after she had finished the rehearsal of *Rosalind* in "As you like it;" that Mrs. Jordan was delighted, that he was at least equally so, that she took the frames away in her carriage, and warmed his heart by telling him that his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence considered the flies equal, if not superior, to any of the kind he had ever seen.

His only other companion in these trips, besides his Dartford friend, was Robert Gomery, or "friend Bob," as he was called by his intimates, at that time an actor at Sadler's Wells,* and for many years afterwards a public favourite at the various minor theatres of the metropolis; who is now, or was lately, enjoying a handsome independence at Bath. With this friend he had a little adventure, which it was his habit to relate with great glee.

One day, he had been fly-hunting with his friend, from early morning until night, thinking of nothing but flies, until at length their thoughts naturally turning to something more substantial, they halted for refreshment.

"Bob," said Grimaldi, "I am very hungry."

"So am I," said Bob.

"There is a public-house," said Grimaldi.

"It is *just* the very thing," observed the other.

It was a very neat public-house, and would have answered the purpose admirably, but Grimaldi having no money, and very much doubting whether his friend had either, did not respond to the sentiment quite so cordially as he might have done.

"We had better go in," said the friend; "it is getting late—you pay."

"No, no, I pay."

queerest faces, then into his left, then into his coat pockets, then into his waistcoat, and finally took off his hat and looked into that; but there was no money anywhere.

They still walked on towards the public-house, meditating with rueful countenances, when Grimaldi spying something lying at the foot of a tree, picked it up, and suddenly exclaimed, with a variety of winks and nods, "Here's a sixpence."

The hungry friend's eyes brightened, but they quickly resumed their gloomy expression as he rejoined, "It's a piece of tin!"

Grimaldi winked again, rubbed the sixpence or the piece of tin very hard, and declared, putting it between his teeth by way of test, that it was as good a sixpence as he would wish to see.

"I don't think it," said the friend, shaking his head.

"I'll tell you what," said Grimaldi, "we'll go to the public-house, and ask the landlord whether it's a good one, or not. They always know."

To this the friend assented, and they hurried on, disputing all the way whether it was really a sixpence, or not; a discovery which could not be made at that time, when the currency was defaced and worn nearly plain, with the ease with which it could be made at present.

The publican, a fat, jolly fellow, was standing at his door, talking to a friend, and the house looked so uncommonly comfortable, that Gomery whispered as they approached, that perhaps it might be best to have some bread and cheese first, and ask about the sixpence afterwards.

Grimaldi nodded his entire assent, and they went in and ordered some bread and cheese, and beer. Having taken the

happened to find in the corner of some theretofore undiscovered pocket, to determine who should present the "sixpence." The chance falling on himself, he walked up to the bar, and with a very lofty air, and laying the questionable metal down with a dignity quite his own, requested the landlord to take the bill out of that.

"Just right, sir," said the landlord, looking at the strange face that his customer assumed, and not at the sixpence.

"It's right, sir, is it?" asked Grimaldi, sternly.

"Quite," answered the landlord; "thank ye, gentlemen." And with this he slipped the—whatever it was—into his pocket.

Gomery looked at Grimaldi, and Grimaldi, with a look and air which baffle all description, walked out of the house, followed by his friend.

"I never knew anything so lucky," he said, as they walked home to supper—"it was quite a Providence—that sixpence."

"A piece of tin, you mean," said Gomery.

Which of the two it was, is uncertain, but Grimaldi often patronised the same house afterwards, and as he never heard anything more about the matter, he felt quite convinced that it was a real good sixpence.

In the early part of the year 1794, they quitted their lodgings in Great Wild-street, and took a six-roomed house, in Penton-place, Pentonville, with a garden attached; a part of this they let off to a Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, who then belonged to Sadler's Wells; and in this manner they lived for three years, during the whole of which period his salaries steadily rose in amount, and he began to consider himself quite independent.

At Easter,* Sadler's Wells opened as usual, and making a

* On Easter Monday, 1796, Sadler's Wells opened with Tom Dibdin's Serio-

great hit in a new part, and in the same time he found a new acquaintance, which exercised a material influence upon his comfort and happiness for many years. The intimacy commenced thus :—

When there was a rehearsal at Sadler's Wells, his mother, who was engaged there as well as himself, was in the habit of remaining at the theatre all day, taking her meals in her dressing-room, and occupying herself with needle-work. This she had done to avoid the long walk in the middle of the day from Sadler's Wells to Great Wild-street, and back again almost directly. It became a habit; and when they had removed to Penton-place, and consequently were so much nearer the theatre

the new Harlequinade Burletta, entitled "Venus's Girdle; or, the World Bewitched," produced on the 1st of August in that year, Master Grimaldi played the part of the Old Woman; his mother, Mrs. Brooker, Lady Simpleton. These entertainments ran through the whole season.

It may not be out of place to notice that Philip Astley this year announced as attractions at his Amphitheatre of Arts, Westminster Bridge, "The most splendid Variety of Novel Amusements ever produced, and which have been composed and arranged by the following celebrated persons,—viz.

"Mons. Mercerot, principal Pastoral Dancer, Ballet Master, and Pantomime Composer.

"Mons. Laurent, Performer of Action, Pierrot, and Pantomime Composer.

"Mr. West, Ballet Master, principal Buffo Dancer, Clown, and Pantomime Composer.

"Mr. Lassells Williamson, Ballet Master, principal Comic Dancer, Harlequin, and Pantomime Composer. The above are the only Pupils of the late celebrated Signor Grimaldi.

The bills added, "Messrs. Astleys most respectfully beg leave to remark, that there never was at any Public Place of Entertainment so many Ballet Masters, Pantomime Composers, &c., engaged at one and the same time, possessing abilities equal to the above performers; their exertions joined to those of Messrs. Astleys, must enable them to give a greater variety than any other Public Place of Summer Amusement."

Williamson was not only the pupil of Signor Grimaldi, but was also his son-in-law, having married Joe's sister, who was announced with him in the Sadler's Wells bills in 1781, as Miss Grimaldi; she was engaged with her husband as

that it was no longer necessary, it still continued. Mr. Hughes, who had now become principal proprietor of the theatre, and who lived in the house attached to it, had several children, the eldest of whom was Miss Maria Hughes, a young lady of considerable accomplishments, who had always been much attached to Grimaldi's mother, and who embraced every opportunity of being in her society. Knowing the hours at which she was in the dressing-room during the day, Miss Hughes was in the habit of taking her work, and sitting with her from three or four o'clock until six, when the other female performers beginning to arrive, she retired. Grimaldi was generally at the theatre between four and five, always taking tea with his mother at the last-named hour, and sitting with her until the arrival of the ladies broke up the little party. In this way an intimacy arose between Miss Hughes and himself, which ultimately ripened into feelings of a warmer nature.

The day after he made his great hit in the new piece, he went as usual to tea in the dressing-room, where Mrs. Lewis, their lodger, who was the wardrobe-keeper of the theatre, happening to be present, overwhelmed him with compliments on his great success. Miss Hughes was there too, but she said nothing for a long time, and Grimaldi, who would rather have heard her speak for a minute than Mrs. Lewis for an hour, listened as patiently as he could to the encomiums which the good woman lavished upon him. At length she stopped, as the best talkers must now and then, to take breath, and then Miss Hughes, looking up, said, with some hesitation, that she thought Mr. Grimaldi had played the part uncommonly well; so well that she was certain there was no one who could have done it at all like him.

his feelings; and with this view he had considered of a good many very smart ones, but somehow or other, the young lady no sooner opened her lips in speech, than Grimaldi opened his in admiration, and out flew all the compliments in empty breath, without producing the slightest sound. He turned very red, looked very funny, and felt very foolish. At length he made an awkward bow, and turned to leave the room.

It was six o'clock, and the lady performers just then came in. As he was always somewhat of a favourite among them, a few of the more volatile and giddy—for there are a few such, in almost all companies, theatrical or otherwise,—began first to praise his acting, and then to rally him upon another subject.

“Now Joe has become such a favourite,” said one, “he ought to look out for a sweetheart.”

Here Joe just glanced at Miss Hughes, and turned a deeper red than ever.

“Certainly he ought,” said another. “Will any of us do, Joe?”

Upon this Joe exhibited fresh symptoms of being uncomfortable, which were hailed by a general burst of laughter.

“I'll tell you what, ladies,” said Mrs. Lewis, “if I'm not greatly mistaken, Joe has got a sweetheart already.”

Another lady said, that to her certain knowledge he had two, and another that he had three, and so on: he standing among them the whole time, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, vexed to death to think that Miss Hughes should hear these libels, and frightened out of his wits lest she should be disposed to believe them.

At length he made his escape, and being induced, by the conversation which had just passed, to ponder upon the matter, he

in the habit of making from similar premises. The discovery was not unattended by many misgivings. The great difference of station, then existing between them, appeared to interpose an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of their marriage; and, further, he had no reason to suppose that the young lady entertained for him any other sentiments than those with which she might be naturally disposed to regard the son of a friend whom she had known so long. These considerations rendered him as unhappy as the most passionate lover could desire to be; he ate little, drank little, slept less, lost his spirits; and, in short, exhibited a great variety of symptoms sufficiently dangerous in any case, but particularly so in one, where the patient had mainly to depend upon the preservation of his powers of fun and comicality for a distant chance of the fulfilment of his hopes.

CHAPTER III.

1794 to 1797.

Grimaldi falls in love—His success—He meets with an accident, which brings the Reader acquainted with that invaluable specific, “Grimaldi’s Embrocation”—He rises gradually in his Profession—The Pentonville Gang of Burglars.

It is scarcely to be supposed that such a sudden and complete change in the merry genius of the theatre could escape the observation of those around him, far less of his mother, who, as he had been her constant and affectionate companion, observed him with anxious solicitude. Various hints and soundings, and indirect inquiries, were the consequence, but they were far from eliciting the truth; he was ill, fatigued by constant exertion in difficult parts, and that was all that his friends could gather from him.

There was another circumstance which puzzled the lady mother more than all. This was, that he never visited the dressing-room, whither he had been accustomed regularly to resort; and that he either took tea before he went to the theatre, or not at all. The truth was, that he was quite unable to endure the facetiousness of the ladies in the presence of Miss Hughes; the more so, because he fancied that his annoyance seemed to afford that young lady considerable amusement; and rather than find this the case, he determined to relinquish the pleasure of her society.

So matters stood for some weeks, when one night, having occasion during the performances to repair to the wardrobe for some articles of dress, he hastily entered, and instead of li-

covering his old friend, Mrs. Lewis, found himself confronted and alone with Mr. Hughes's daughter.

In these cases, if the lady exhibit emotion, the gentleman gains courage; but Miss Hughes exhibited no emotion, merely saying,

"Why, Joe, I have not seen you for a fortnight; where *have* you been hiding! How is it that I never see you at tea now?"

The tone of kindness in which this was said, somewhat reassured the lover, so he made an effort to speak, and got as far as, "I'm not well."

"Not well!" said the young lady. And she said it so kindly that all poor Joe's emotion returned; and being really ill and weak, and very sensitive withal, he made an effort or two to look cheerful, and burst into tears.

The young lady looked at him for a moment or two quite surprised, and then said, in a tone of earnest commiseration, "I see that you are not well, and that you are very much changed: what is the matter with you? Pray tell me."

At this inquiry, the young man, who seems to have inherited all the sensitiveness of his father's character without its worst points, threw himself into a chair, and cried like a child, vainly endeavouring to stammer out a few words, which were wholly unintelligible. Miss Hughes gently endeavoured to soothe him, and at that moment, Mrs. Lewis, suddenly entering the room, surprised them in this very sentimental situation; upon which Grimaldi, thinking he must have made himself very ridiculous, jumped up and ran away.

Mrs. Lewis being older in years, and in such matters too, than either Miss Hughes or her devoted admirer, kept her own counsel, thought over what she had seen, and discreetly pre-

He tried an excuse or two, but reposing great trust in the sagacity and sincerity of his questioner, and sadly wanting a confidante, he first solemnly bound her to secrecy, and then told his tale. Mrs. Lewis at once took upon herself the office of a go-between; undertook to sound Miss Hughes without delay; and counselled Grimaldi to prepare a letter containing a full statement of his feelings, which, if the conversation between herself and Miss Hughes on that very evening were propitious, should be delivered on the following.

Accordingly, he devoted all his leisure time that day to the composition of various epistles, and the spoiling of many sheets of paper, with the view to setting down his feelings in the very best and appropriate terms he could possibly employ. One complete letter was finished at last, although even that was not half powerful enough; and going to the theatre, and carefully avoiding the old dressing-room, he went through his part with greater éclat than before. Having hastily changed his dress, he hurried to Mrs. Lewis's room, where that good lady at once detailed all the circumstances that had occurred since the morning, which she thought conclusive, but which the lover feared were not.

It seems that Mrs. Lewis had embraced the first opportunity of being left alone with Miss Hughes to return to the old subject of Joe's looking very ill; to which Miss Hughes replied, that he certainly did, and said it, too, according to the matured opinion of Mrs. Lewis, as if she had been longing to introduce the subject without exactly knowing how.

"What can be the matter with him?" said Miss Hughes.

"I have found it out, Miss," said Mrs. Lewis; "Joe is in love."

"In love!" said Miss Hughes.

“Who is the lady?” asked Miss Hughes, inspecting some object that lay near her with every appearance of unconcern.

“That’s a secret,” said Mrs. Lewis; “I know her name; she does not know he is in love with her yet; but I am going to give her a letter to-morrow night, telling her all about it.”

“I should like to know her name,” said Miss Hughes.

“Why,” returned Mrs. Lewis, “you see I promised Joe not to tell; but as you are so very anxious to know, I can let you into the secret without breaking my word: you shall see the direction of the letter.”

Miss Hughes was quite delighted with the idea, and left the room, after making an appointment for the ensuing evening for that purpose.

Such was Mrs. Lewis’s tale in brief; after hearing which, Grimaldi, who, not being so well acquainted with the subject, was not so sanguine, went home to bed, but not to sleep: his thoughts wavering between his friend’s communication, and the love-letter, of which he could not help thinking that he could still polish up a sentence or two with considerable advantage.

The next morning was one of great agitation, and when Mrs. Lewis posted off to the theatre with the important epistle in her pocket, the lover fell into such a tremor of anxiety and suspense, that he was quite unconscious how the day passed: he could stay away from the theatre no longer than five o’clock, at which time he hurried down to ascertain the fate of his letter.

“I have not been able to give it yet,” said Mrs. Lewis, softly, “but do you just go to the dressing-room; she is there:—only look at her, and guess whether she cares for you or not.”

He went, and saw Miss Hughes looking very pale, with traces of tears on her face. Six o’clock soon came, and the young lady.

“Why, upon my word,” said Mrs. Lewis, “I think I should be doing wrong if I showed it to you, unless Joe said I might.”

“Wrong!” echoed the young lady; “oh! if you only knew how much I have suffered since last night!” Here she paused for some moments, and added, with some violence of tone and manner, that if that suspense lasted much longer, she should go mad.

“Hey-day! Miss Maria,” exclaimed Mrs. Lewis,—“mad! Why, surely you cannot have been so imprudent as to have formed an attachment to Joe yourself? But you shall see the letter, as you wish it; there is only one thing you must promise, and that is, to plead Joe’s cause with the lady herself.”

Miss Hughes hesitated, faltered, and at length said, she would try.

At this point of the discourse, Mrs. Lewis produced the laboured composition, and placed it in her hand.

Miss Hughes raised the letter, glanced at the direction, saw her own name written as plainly as the nervous fingers of its agitated writer would permit, let it fall to the ground, and sunk into the arms of Mrs. Lewis.

While this scene was acting in a private room, Grimaldi was acting upon the public stage; and conscious that his hopes depended upon his exertions, he did not suffer his anxieties, great as they were, to interfere with his performance. Towards the conclusion of the first piece he heard somebody enter Mr. Hughes’s box—and there sat the object of all his anxiety.

“She has got the letter,” thought the trembling actor; “she must have decided by this time.”

He would have given all he possessed to have known what had passed,—when the business of the stage calling him to the front, exactly facing the box in which he had just seen

Miss Hughes had nodded and smiled to Joseph Grimaldi, but it threw him into a state of confusion and agitation which at once deprived him of all consciousness of what he was about. He never heard that he did not finish the scene in which he was engaged at the moment, and he always supposed, in consequence, that he did so : but how, or in what manner, he never could imagine, not having the slightest recollection of anything that passed.

It is singular enough that throughout the whole of Grimaldi's existence, which was a chequered one enough, even at those years when other children are kept in the cradle or the nursery, there always seemed some odd connexion between his good and bad fortune ; no great pleasure appeared to come to him unaccompanied by some accident or mischance : he mentions the fact more than once, and lays great stress upon it.

On this very night, a heavy platform, on which ten men were standing, broke down, and fell upon him as he stood underneath ; a severe contusion of the shoulder was the consequence, and he was carried home immediately. Remedies were applied without loss of time, but he suffered intense pain all night ; it gradually abated towards morning, in consequence of the inestimable virtues of a certain embrocation, which he always kept ready in case of such accidents, and which was prepared from a recipe left him by his father, which, having performed a great many cures, he afterwards gave to one Mr. Chamberlaine, a surgeon of Clerkenwell, who christened it, in acknowledgment, "Grimaldi's Embrocation," and used it in his general practice some years with perfect success. Before he was carried from the theatre, however, he had had the presence of mind to beg Mrs. Lewis to be called to him, and to request her to com-

There is no need to lengthen this part of his history, which, however interesting, and most honourably so, to the old man himself, who in the last days of his life looked back with undiminished interest and affection to the early time when he first became acquainted with the excellence of a lady, to whom he was tenderly attached, and whose affection he never forgot or trifled with, would possess but few attractions for the general reader. The main result is quickly told : he was lying on a sofa next day, with his arm in a sling, when Miss Hughes visited him, and did not affect to disguise her solicitude for his recovery ; and, in short, by returning his affection, made him the happiest man, or rather boy (for he was not yet quite sixteen), in the world.

There was only one thing that damped his joy, and this was, Miss Hughes's firm and steadfast refusal to continue any correspondence or communication with him unknown to her parents. Nor is it unnatural that this announcement should have occasioned him some uneasiness, when their relative situations in life are taken into consideration ; Mr. Hughes being a man of considerable property, and Grimaldi entirely dependent on his own exertions for support.

He made use of every persuasion in his power to induce the young lady to alter her determination ; he failed to effect anything beyond the compromise, that for the present she would only mention their attachment to her mother, upon whose kindness and secrecy she was certain she could rely. This was done, and Mrs. Hughes, finding that her daughter's happiness depended on her decision, offered no opposition, merely remarking that their extreme youth forbade all idea of marriage at that time. Three years elapsed before Mr. Hughes was made acquainted with the secret.

Miss Hughes every evening in his mother's presence, and every Sunday she spent with them. All this time his reputation was rapidly increasing; almost every new part he played rendered him a greater favourite than before, and altogether his lot in life was a cheerful and contented one.

At this period, the only inhabitants of the house in Penton-place were Grimaldi and his mother, and Mrs. Lewis, of whom honourable mention has been so often made in the present chapter, together with her husband; there was no servant in the house; a girl that had lived with them some time having gone into the country to see her friends, and no other having been engaged in her absence.

One night in the middle of August, a "night rehearsal" was called at Sadler's Wells. For the information of those who are unacquainted with theatrical matters, it may be well to state that a "night rehearsal" takes place after the other performances of the evening are over, and the public have left the house. Being an inconvenient and fatiguing ceremony, it is never resorted to, but when some very heavy piece (that is, one on a very extensive scale) is to be produced on a short notice. In this instance a new piece was to be played on the following Monday, of which the performers knew very little, and there being no time to lose, a "night rehearsal" was called, the natural consequence of which would be the detention of the company at the theatre until four o'clock in the morning at least. Mr. Lewis, having notice of the rehearsal in common with the other performers, locked up their dwelling-house, being the last person who left it; brought the street-door key with him, and handed it over to Mr. Grimaldi.

But after the performances were over, which was shortly after

"Ladies and Gentlemen, as the new drama will not be produced, as was originally intended, on Monday next, but is deferred until that night week, we shall not be compelled to trouble you with a rehearsal to-night."

This notification occasioned a very quick dispersion of the performers, who, very unexpectedly released from an onerous attendance, hurried home. Grimaldi, having something to do at the theatre which would occupy him about ten minutes, sent his mother and his friend Mrs. Lewis forward to prepare supper, and followed them shortly afterwards, accompanied by Mr. Lewis and two other performers attached to the theatre.

When the females reached home they found to their great surprise that the garden gate was open.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Grimaldi,* "how careless this is of Mr. Lewis!"

It was, undoubtedly; for at that time a most notorious gang of thieves infested that suburb of London;—it was a suburb then. Several of the boldest had been hung, and others transported, but these punishments had no effect upon their more lucky companions, who committed their depredations with, if possible, increased hardihood and daring.

They were not a little surprised, after crossing the garden, to find that not only was the garden-gate open, but that the street-door was unlocked; and pushing it gently open, they observed the reflection of a light at the end of the passage, upon which of course they both cried "Thieves!" and screamed for help. A man who was employed at Sadler's Wells happened to be passing at the time, and tendered his assistance.

"Do you wait here with Mrs. Lewis a minute," said Grimaldi's mother, "and I will go into the house; don't mind me unless

entered the kitchen, hastily struck a light, and on lighting a candle and looking round, discovered that the place had been plundered of almost everything it contained.

She was running up stairs to communicate their loss, when Grimaldi and his friends arrived. Hearing what had occurred, they entered the house in a body, and proceeded to search it narrowly, thinking it probable that some of the thieves, surprised upon the premises, might be still lurking there. In they rushed, the party augmented by the arrival of two watchmen,—chosen, as the majority of that fine body of men invariably were, with a specific view to their old age and infirmities,—and began their inspection: the women screaming and crying, and the men all shouting together.

The house was in a state of great disorder and confusion, but no thieves were to be seen; the cupboards were forced, the drawers had been broken open, and every article they contained had been removed, with the solitary exception of a small net shawl, which had been worked by Miss Hughes, and given by her to her chosen mother-in-law.

Leaving the others to search the house, and the females to bewail their loss, which was really a very severe one, Grimaldi beckoned a Mr. King, one of the persons who had accompanied him home from the theatre, and suggested in a whisper that they should search the garden together.

King readily complied, and he having armed himself with a heavy stick, and Grimaldi with an old broad-sword which he had hastily snatched from its peg on the first alarm, they crept cautiously into the back garden, which was separated from those of the houses on either side by a wall from three to four feet high, and from a very extensive piece of pasture-land be-

of his comrade in the darkness of the night, cried softly, "Hush! hush! is that you?"

"Yes!" replied Grimaldi, getting as near him as he could. Seeing that the man, recognising the voice as a strange one, was about to jump down, he dealt him a heavy blow with the broadsword. He yelled out loudly, and stopping for an instant, as if in extreme pain, dropped to the ground, limped off a few paces, and was lost in the darkness.

Grimaldi shouted to his friend to follow him through the back gate, but seeing, from his station on the wall, that he and the thief took directly opposite courses, he leapt into the field, and set off at full speed. He was stopped in the very outset of his career, by tumbling over a cow, which was lying on the ground, in which involuntary pantomimic feat he would most probably have cut his own head off with the weapon he carried, if his theatrical practice as a fencer had not taught him to carry edge tools with caution.

The companion having taken a little run by himself, soon returned out of breath, to say he had seen nobody, and they re-entered the house, where by the light of the candle it was seen that the sword was covered with blood.

The constable of the night had arrived by this time; and a couple of watchmen bearing large lanterns, to show the thieves they were coming, issued forth into the field, in hopes of taking the offenders alive or dead—they would have preferred the latter;—and of recovering any of the stolen property that might be scattered about. The direction which the wounded man had taken having been pointed out, they began to explore, by very slow degrees.

Bustling about, striving to raise the spirits of the party, and

the thieves had condescended to leave, one of the first things Grimaldi chanced to light upon was Miss Hughes's shawl.

"Maria's gift, at all events," he said, taking it up and giving it a slight wave in his hand; when out fell a lozenge-box upon the floor, much more heavily than a lozenge-box with any ordinary lozenges inside would do.

Upon this the mother clapped her hands, and set up a louder scream than she had given vent to when she found the house robbed.

"My money! my money!" she screamed.

"It can't be helped, my dear madam," said everybody; "think of poor Mrs. Lewis; she is quite as badly off."

"Oh, I don't mean that," was the reply. "Oh! thank Heaven, they didn't find my money." So with many half-frantic exclamations, she picked up the lozenge-box, and there, sure enough, were thirty-seven guineas, (it was completely full,) which had lain securely concealed beneath the shawl!

They sat down to supper; but although Mrs. Grimaldi* now cheered up wonderfully, and quite rallied her friend upon her low spirits, poor Mrs. Lewis, who had found no lozenge-box, was quite unable to overcome her loss. Supper over, and some hot potations, which the fright had rendered absolutely necessary, despatched, the friends departed, and the usual inmates of the house were left alone to make such preparations for passing the night as they deemed fitting.

They were ludicrous enough: upon comparing notes, it was found that nobody could sleep alone, upon which they came to the conclusion, that they had better all sleep in the same room. For this purpose, a mattress was dragged into the front parlour, upon which the two females bestowed themselves with-

broadsword, and laid it by his side, drew another easy-chair near the door, and there mounted guard.

All had been quiet for some time, and they were falling asleep, when they were startled by a long loud knocking at the back-door, which led into the garden. They all started up and gazed upon each other, with looks of considerable dismay. The females would have screamed, only they were too frightened; and the men would have laughed it off, but they were quite unable from the same cause to muster the faintest smile.

Grimaldi was the first to recover the sudden shock, which the supposed return of the robbers had communicated to the party, and turning to Lewis, said, with one of his oddest looks,

"You had better go to the back-door, old boy, and see who it is."

Mr. Lewis did not appear quite satisfied upon the point. He reflected for a short time, and looking with a very blank face at his wife, said he was much obliged to Mr. Grimaldi, but he would rather not.

In this dilemma, it was arranged that Lewis should wait in the passage, and that Grimaldi should creep softly up stairs, and reconnoitre the enemy from the window above—a plan which Lewis thought much more feasible, and which was at once put in execution.

While these deliberations were going forward, the knocking had continued without cessation, and it now began to assume a subdued and confidential tone, which, instead of subduing their alarm, rather tended to increase it. Armed with the two pistols and the broadsword, and looking much more like Robinson Crusoe than either the "Shipwrecked Mariner," or the "Little Clown" Grimaldi thrust his head out of the window, and

It was between two and three o'clock in the morning,—the day was breaking, and the light increasing fast. He could descry two men at the door heavily laden with something, but with what he could not discern. All he could see was, that it was not fire-arms, and that was a comfort.

“Hollo ! hollo !” he shouted out of the window, displaying the brace of pistols and the broadsword to the best advantage ; “ what’s the matter there ?” Here he coughed very fiercely, and again demanded what was the matter.

“ Why, sir,” replied one of the men, looking up, and holding on his hat as he did so, “ we thought we should never wake ye.”

“ And what did you want to wake me for ?” was the natural inquiry.

“ Why, the property !” replied both the men at the same time.

“ The what ?” inquired the master of the house, taking in the broadsword, and putting the pistols on the window-sill.

“ The property !” replied the two men, pettishly. “ Here we have been a-looking over the field all this time, and have found the property.”

No further conversation was necessary. The door was opened, and the watchmen entered bearing two large sacks, which they had stumbled on in the field, and the females, falling on their knees before them, began dragging forth their contents in an agony of impatience. After a lengthened examination, it was found that the sacks contained every article that had been taken away ; that not one, however trifling, was missing ; and that they had come into possession, besides, of a complete and extensive assortment of house-breaking tools, including centre-bit,

The conversation naturally turned upon the robbery, and various conjectures and surmises were hazarded relative to the persons by whom it had been committed. It appeared perfectly evident that the thieves, whoever they were, must have obtained information of the expected night rehearsal at Sadler's Wells; it was equally clear that if the rehearsal had not been most fortunately postponed, they would not only have lost everything they possessed, but the thieves would have got clear off with the booty into the bargain. It was worthy of remark, that the house had never been attempted when the servant girl was at home, and the females were half inclined to attach suspicion to her; but on reflection it seemed unlikely that she was implicated in the transaction, for she was the daughter of very respectable parents, not to mention her uncle having held the situation of master-tailor to the theatre for forty years, and her aunt having served the family in the same capacity as the girl herself. In addition to these considerations, she had been well brought up, had always appeared strictly honest, and had already lived in the house for nearly four years. Upon these grounds it was resolved that the girl could not be a party to the attempt.

But whoever committed the burglary, it was necessary that the house should be well secured, with which view a carpenter was sent for, and a great supply of extra bolts and bars were placed upon the different doors. Notwithstanding these precautions, however, and the additional security which they necessarily afforded, the females were very nervous for a long time, and the falling of a plate, or slamming of a door, or a loud ringing at the bell, or above all, the twopenny postman after dark, was sufficient to throw them into the extremity of terror. Being determined not to leave the house, in future, without somebody to take care of

which time, at all events, some of the family would be able to reach home. The man was hired, and commenced his watch, on the night after the robbery; and there he continued to remain, every evening, until the return of the servant girl from the country released him from further attendance.

The agitation and surprise of this girl were very great, when she was informed of what had occurred, but they did not appear to be the emotions of a guilty person. All agreed that there was no good ground of suspicion against her. She was asked if she would be afraid to be left alone in the house after what had taken place, when she declared that she was not afraid of any thieves, and that she would willingly sit up alone, as she had been accustomed to do; merely stipulating that she should be allowed to light a fire in Lewis's sitting room, for the purpose of inducing robbers to suppose that the family were at home, and that she should be provided with a large rattle, with which to alarm the neighbours at any appearance of danger. Both requests were complied with; and as an additional precaution, the street watchman, whose box was within a few yards of the door, was fee'd to be on the alert, to keep a sharp eye upon the house, and to attend to any summons from within, whenever it might be made.

The thieves, whoever they were, were very wanton fellows, and added outrage to plunder, for with the most heartless cruelty, and an absence of all taste for scientific pursuits, which would stigmatise them at once as occupying a very low grade in their profession, had broken open a closet in Grimaldi's room, containing his chosen cabinet of insects, including Dartford Blues, which, either because it was not portable, or because

been most indefatigable ; and it would have cost at least 200*l*. to have replaced them by purchase. This unforeseen calamity put a total stop to the fly-catching, so collecting together his nets, and cases, and the only box which was not destroyed, he gave them all away next day to an acquaintance who had a taste for such things, and never more employed himself in a similar manner.

After the lapse of a short time, the arrangements and precautions infused renewed confidence into the inmates of the house, and they began to feel more secure than they had yet done since the robbery ; a fortnight had now passed over, and they strengthened themselves with the reflection, that the thieves having met with so disagreeable a reception, one of them at least having been severely wounded, were very unlikely to renew the attempt.

But well founded as these conjectures might seem, they reckoned without their host, for on the third night, after the girl's return, they made a fresh attack, for which we will reserve a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

1797 to 1798.

The thieves make a second attempt; alarmed by their perseverance, Grimaldi repairs to Hatton Garden—Interview with Mr. Trott; ingenious device of that gentleman and its result on the third visit of the Burglars—Comparative attractions of Pantomime and Spectacle—Trip to Gravesend and Chatham—Disagreeable recognition of a good-humoured friend, and an agreeable mode of journeying recommended to all Travellers.

ON the third night,—the previous two having passed in perfect quiet and security,—the servant girl was at work in the kitchen, when she fancied she heard a sound as if some person were attempting to force open the garden-door. She thought it merely the effect of fancy at first, but the noise continuing, she went softly up stairs into the passage, and on looking towards the door, saw that the latch was moved up and down several times by a hand outside, while some person pushed violently against the door itself.

The poor girl being very much frightened, her first impulse was to scream violently; but so far were her cries from deterring the persons outside from persisting in their attempt, that they only seemed to press it with redoubled vigour. Indeed, so violent were their exertions, as if irritated by the noise the girl made, that the door was very nearly forced from its position, in which state it was discovered on a subsequent inspection. If it had not been proof against the attacks of the thieves, the girl

for the robbers in the rear of the house, but they had thought it prudent to escape quietly.

Upon the return of the family, all their old apprehensions were revived, and their former fears were increased tenfold by the bold and daring nature of this second attempt. Watch was kept all night, the watchers starting at the slightest sound ; rest was out of the question, and nothing but dismay and confusion prevailed.

The next morning it was resolved that the house should be fortified with additional strength, and that when these precautions had been taken, Grimaldi should repair to the police-office of the district, state his case to the sitting magistrate, and claim the assistance of the constituted authorities.

Having had bars of iron, and plates of iron, and patent locks, and a variety of ingenious defences affixed to the interior of the garden-door, which, when fastened with all these appurtenances, appeared nearly impregnable, Grimaldi accordingly walked down to Hatton Garden, with the view of backing the locks and bolts with the aid of the executive.

There was at that time a very shrewd, knowing officer attached to that establishment, whose name was Trott. This Trott was occasionally employed to assist the regular constables at the theatre, when they expected a great house ; and Grimaldi no sooner stepped into the passage, than walking up to him, Trott accosted him with :—

“ How do, master ? ”

“ How do *you* do ? ”

“ Pretty well, thankee, master ; I was just going to call up at your place.”

“ Ah ! ” said the other, “ you have heard of it, then ? ”

“ Yes, I have heard of it,” said Mr. Trott, with a grin. “ and

"You don't surely mean to say that you have apprehended the burglars?"

"No, no, I don't mean that; I wish I did: they have been one too many for me as yet. Why, when they first started in business there worn't fewer than twenty men in that gang. Sixteen or seventeen on 'em have been hung or transported, and the rest is them that has been at your house. They have got a hiding-place somewhere in Pentonville. I'll tell you what, master," said Trott, taking the other by the button, and speaking in a hoarse whisper, "they are the worst of the lot; up to everything they are; and take my word for it, Mr. Grimaldi, they'll stick at nothing."

Grimaldi looked anything but pleased at this intelligence, and Trott observing his disturbed countenance, added,—

"Don't you be alarmed, master; what they want is, their revenge for their former disappointment. That's what it is," said Trott, nodding his head sagaciously.

"It appears very extraordinary," said Grimaldi. "This is a very distressing situation to be placed in."

"Why, so it is," said the officer, after a little consideration;—"so it is, when you consider that they never talk without doing. But don't be afraid, Mr. Grimaldi."

"Oh no, I'm not," replied the other; adding, in as cool a manner as he could assume, "they came again last night."

"I know that," said the officer. "I'll let you into another secret, master. They are coming again to-night."

"Again to-night!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

"As sure as fate," replied the officer, nodding to a friend who was passing down the street on the other side of the way,—
"and if your establishment an't large enough, and powerful

mother."

"I dare say it would," acquiesced the officer; "my mother was killed in a similar manner."

This, like the rest of the officer's discourse, was far from consolatory, and Grimaldi looked anxiously in his face for something like a ray of hope.

Mr. Trott meditated for some short time, and then, looking up with his head on one side, said, "I think I see a way now, master."

"What is it? What do you propose? I'm agreeable to anything," said Grimaldi, in a most accommodating manner.

"Never mind that," said the officer. "You put yourself into my hands, and I'll be the saving of your property, and the taking of them."

Grimaldi burst into many expressions of admiration and gratitude, and put his hand into Mr. Trott's hands, as an earnest of his readiness to deposit himself there.

"Only rid us," said Grimaldi, "of these dreadful visitors, who really keep us in a state of perpetual misery, and anything you think proper to accept shall be cheerfully paid you."

The officer replied, with many moral observations on the duties of police-officers, their incorruptible honesty, their zeal, and rigid discharge of the functions reposed in them. If Mr. Grimaldi would do his duty to his country, and prosecute them to conviction, that was all he required.

To this, Grimaldi, not having any precise idea of the expense of a prosecution, readily assented, and the officer declared he should be sufficiently repaid by the pleasing consciousness of having done his duty. He did not consider it necessary to add, that a reward had been offered for the apprehension of the same offenders, payable on their conviction.

inspected it with the practised eye of an experienced person, declared himself thoroughly satisfied, and stated that if his injunctions were strictly attended to, he had no doubt his final operations would be completely successful.

“It will be necessary,” said Trott, speaking with great pomp and grandeur, as the inmates assembled round him to hear his oration,—“it will be necessary to take every portable article out of the back kitchen, the parlour, and the bed-room, and to give me up the entire possession of this house for one night; at least until such time as I shall have laid my hand upon these here gentlemen.”

It is needless to say that this proposition was agreed to, and that the females at once went about clearing the rooms as the officer had directed. At five o'clock in the afternoon he returned, and the keys of the house were delivered up to him. These arrangements having been made, the family departed to the theatre as usual, leaving Mr. Trott alone in the house; for the servant girl had been sent away to a neighbour's by his desire, whether from any feeling of delicacy on the part of Mr. Trott, (who was a married man,) or from any apprehension that she might impede his operations, we are not informed.

The officer remained alone in the house, taking care not to go near any of the windows until it was dark, when two of his colleagues, coming by appointment to the garden-door, were stealthily admitted into the house. Having carefully scrutinised the whole place, they disposed themselves in the following order. One man locked and bolted in the front kitchen, another locked and bolted himself in the sitting-room above stairs, and Mr. Trott, the presiding genius, in the front-parlour towards the street: the last-named gentleman having, before he retired into

they listened intently, and were occasionally deceived for an instant by some noise in the street, but it soon subsided again, and all was silent as before.

At length, some time after night-fall, a low knock came to the street-door. No attention being paid to it, the knock was repeated, and this time it was rather louder. It echoed through the house, but no one stirred. After a short interval, as if the person outside had been listening and had satisfied himself, a slight rattling was heard at the keyhole, and, the lock being picked, the footsteps of two men were heard in the passage.

They quietly bolted the door after them, and pulling from beneath their coats a couple of dark lanterns, walked softly up stairs. Finding the door of the front-room locked, they came down again, and tried the front-parlour, which was also locked, whereat, Mr. Trott, who was listening with his ear close to the handle, laughed immoderately, but without noise.

Unsuccessful in these two attempts, they went down stairs, and with some surprise found one of the kitchens locked, and the other open. Only stopping just to peep into the open one, they once more ascended to the passage.

"Well," said one of the men, as he came up the kitchen stairs, "we have got it all to ourselves to-night, anyway, so we had better not lose any time. Hollo!"—

"What's the matter?" said the other, looking back.

"Look here!" rejoined his comrade, pointing to the garden-door, with the bolts, and iron plates, and patent locks,—“here's protection—here's security for a friend. These have been put on since we were here afore; we might have tried to get in for everlasting.”

"We had better stick it open," said the other man, "and then if there's any game in front we can get off—"

"Easily said. How do you do it?" said the first speaker: "it will take no end of time, and make no end of noise, to undo all these things. We had better look sharp. There's no rehearsal to-night, remember."

At this, they both laughed, and determining to take the front-parlour first, picked the lock without more ado. This done, they pushed against the door to open it, but were unable to do so by reason of the bolts inside, which Mr. Trott had taken good care to thrust into the staples as far as they would possibly go.

"This is a rum game!" said one of the fellows, giving the door a kick, "it wont open!"

"Never mind, let it be," said the other man; "there's a spring or something. The back kitchen's open; we had better begin there; we know there's some property here, because we took it away before. Show yourself smart, and bring the bag."

As the speaker stooped to trim his lantern, the other man joined him, and said, with an oath and a chuckle—

"Shouldn't you like to know who it was as struck you with the sword, Tom?"

"I wish I did," growled the other; "I'd put a knife in him before many days was over. Come on."

They went down stairs, and Trott, softly gliding from his hiding-place, double-locked the street-door, and put the key in his pocket. He then stationed himself at the top of the kitchen stairs, where he listened with great glee to the exclamations of surprise and astonishment which escaped the robbers, as they opened drawer after drawer, and found them all empty.

"Everything taken away!"—said one of the men: "what the

noise of the other two concert unloading and unloading the doors of their hiding-places. The thieves, scrambling up stairs, rushed quickly to the street-door, but, in consequence of its being locked, they were unable to escape; were easily made prisoners, handcuffed, and borne away in triumph.

The affair was all over, and the house restored to order, when the family came home. The officer who had been despatched to bring the servant home, and left behind to bear her company in case any of the companions of the thieves should pay the house a visit, took his departure as soon as they appeared, bearing with him a large sack left behind by the robbers, which contained as extensive an assortment of the implements of their trade, as had been so fortunately captured on their first appearance.

Grimaldi appeared at Hatton Garden the next morning, and was introduced to the prisoners for the first time. His testimony having been taken, and the evidence of Mr. Trott and his men received, by which the identity of the criminals was clearly proved, they were fully committed for trial, and Grimaldi was bound over to prosecute. They were tried at the ensuing Sessions; the jury at once found them guilty, and they were transported for life.

This anecdote, which is narrated in every particular precisely as the circumstances occurred, affords a striking and curious picture of the state of society in and about London, in this respect, at the very close of the last century. The bold and daring highwaymen who took the air at Hounslow, Bagshot, Finchley, and a hundred other places of quite fashionable resort, had ceased to canter their blood-horses over heath and road in search of plunder, but there still existed in the capital and its environs, common and poorer gangs of thieves, whose depreda-

public papers for a month; but three such attempts on the same house, and by the same men, would set all London, and all the country for thirty miles round to boot, in a ferment of wonder and indignation.

It was proved, on the examination of these men at the police-office, that they were the only remaining members of a band of thieves called the "Pentonville Robbers," and the prosecutor and his family congratulated themselves not a little upon the fact, inasmuch as it relieved them from the apprehension that there were any more of their companions left behind who might feel disposed to revenge their fate.

This was Grimaldi's first visit to a police-office. His next appearance on the same scene was under very different circumstances. But of this anon.

The fears of the family had been so thoroughly roused, and their dreams were haunted by such constant visions of the Pentonville Robbers, that the house grew irksome and distressing, especially to the females. Moreover, Grimaldi now began to think it high time that his marriage should take place; and, as now that he had gained the mother's approval, he did not so entirely despair of succeeding with the father, he resolved to take a larger house, and to furnish and fit it up handsomely, on a scale proportionate to his increased means. He naturally trusted that Mr. Hughes would be more disposed to entrust his daughter's happiness to his charge when he found that her suitor was enabled to provide her with a comfortable, if not an elegant home, and to support her in a sphere of life not very distantly removed from that in which her father's fortunes and possessions entitled her to be placed.

Accordingly, he gave notice to the landlord of the ill-fated

properly says, "*of course*" he referred everything, they wandered about the whole neighbourhood in search of some house that would be more suitable to them. Penton-street was the St. James's of Pentonville, the Regent's Park of the City-road, in those days; and here he was fortunate enough to secure the house No. 37, which was forthwith furnished and fitted up, agreeably to the taste and direction of Miss Hughes herself.

He had plenty of time to devote to the contemplation of his expected happiness, and the complete preparation of his new residence, for Sadler's Wells Theatre was then closed,—the season terminating at that time at the end of October,—and as he was never wanted at Drury Lane until Christmas, and not much then, unless they produced a pantomime, his theatrical avocations were not of a very heavy or burdensome description.

This year, too, the proprietors of Drury Lane, in pursuance of a custom to which they had adhered for some years, produced an expensive pageant instead of a pantomime; an alteration, in Grimaldi's opinion, very little for the better, if not positively for the worse. It having been the established custom for many years to produce a pantomime at Christmas, the public naturally looked for it; and although such pieces as "*Blue Beard*," "*Feudal Times*," "*Lodoiska*," and others of the same class, undoubtedly drew money to the house, still it is questionable whether they were so profitable to the treasury as the pantomimes at Covent Garden. If we may judge from the result, they certainly were not, for after several years' trial, during the whole of which time pantomimes were annually produced at Covent Garden, the Christmas pantomime was again brought forward at Drury Lane, to the exclusion of spectacle.

He played in all these pieces "*Blue Beard*" and so forth.

sterers, even the painters, had left the Penton-street mansion, and there being no pantomime, it seemed a very eligible period for being married at once.

Grimaldi told Miss Hughes that he thought so : Miss Hughes replied that he had only to gain her father's consent in the first instance, and then the day should be fixed without more ado.

This was precisely what the lover was most anxious to avoid, for two reasons : firstly, because it involved the very probable postponement of his happiness ; and secondly, because the obtaining this consent was an awkward process. At last he recollected that in consequence of Mr. Hughes being out of town, it was quite impossible to ask him.

“ Very good,” said Miss Hughes ; “ everything happens for the best. I am sure you would never venture to speak to him on the subject, so you had far better write. He will not keep you long in suspense, I know, for he is quite certain to answer your letter by return of post.”

Mr. Hughes was then at Exeter ; and as it certainly did appear to his destined son-in-law a much better course to write than to speak, even if he had been in London, he sat down without delay, and, after various trials, produced such a letter as he thought would be most likely to find its way to the father's heart. Miss Hughes approving of the contents, it was re-read, copied, punctuated, folded, and posted.

Next day the lady was obliged to leave town, to spend a short time with some friends at Gravesend ; and the lover, very much to his annoyance and regret, was fain to stay behind, and console himself as he best could, in his mistress's absence, and the absence of a reply from her father, to which he naturally looked forward with considerable impatience and anxiety.

his mistress and his letter, he was almost beside himself with anxiety and suspense. It was with no small pleasure, then, that he received a note from Miss Hughes, entreating him to take a trip down to Gravesend in one of the sailing-boats on the following Sunday, as he could return by the same conveyance on the same night. Of course he was not slow to avail himself of the invitation; so he took shipping at the Tower on the morning of the day appointed, and reached the place of his destination in pretty good time. The only water communication was by sailing-boats; and as at that time people were not independent of wind and tide, and everything but steam, the passengers were quite satisfied to get down when they did.

He found Miss Hughes waiting for him at the landing-place, and getting into a "tide" coach, they proceeded to Chatham, Miss Hughes informing him that she had made a confidant of her brother, who was stationed there, and that they purposed spending the day together.

"And now, Joe," said Miss Hughes, when he had expressed the pleasure which this arrangement afforded him, "tell me everything that has happened. What does my father say?"

"My dear," replied Grimaldi, "he says nothing at all; he has not answered my letter."

"Not answered your letter!" said the lady: "his punctuality is proverbial."

"So I have always heard," replied Grimaldi: "but so it is; I have not heard a syllable."

"Then you must write again, Joe," said Miss Hughes, "immediately, without the least delay. Let me see,—you cannot very well write to-day, but to-morrow you must not fail: I cannot account for his silence."

were not long in determining that it must be so. Dismissing the subject from their minds, they spent the day happily, in company with young Mr. Hughes, and returning to Gravesend in the evening by another tide coach, Grimaldi was on board the sailing-boat shortly before eleven o'clock; it being arranged that Miss Hughes was to follow on the next Saturday.

In the cabin of the boat he found Mr. De Cleve,* at that time treasurer of Sadler's Wells. There are jealousies in theatres, as there are in courts, ball-rooms, and boarding-schools; and this Mr. De Cleve was jealous of Grimaldi—not because he stood in *his* way, for he had no touch of comedy in his composition, but because he had eclipsed, and indeed altogether outshone, one Mr. Hartland, “a very clever and worthy man,” says Grimaldi, who was at that time also engaged as a pantomimic and melodramatic actor at Sadler's Wells. Mr. De Cleve, thinking for

* Vincent de Cleve, facetiously nick-named among his associates, “Polly de Cleve,” not from any effeminacy of character or manner, or his almost intolerable abuse of the King's English by the constant utterance of the most flagrant cockneyisms, but for his Marplot qualities, which ever prompted him to pry into everybody's business, and create by his interference the most vexatious mischief. He was an odd fish. Talent he had; he was no contemptible composer and musician, and in his office, as treasurer to the Wells for many years, strictly honest. Between Sadler's Wells and the Angel was an old building, immediately opposite Lady Owen's Almshouses, now also demolished, called Goose Farm; it belonged to Mr. Laycock, the cow-keeper of Islington; but had ceased to be a farm-house; and was divided into tenements; the first and second floors were each divided into two suites of apartments. On the first floor in that next the Wells, resided John Cawse, the artist, whose daughters subsequently distinguished themselves as vocalists of no common power, and made their debut in 1820 at Sadler's Wells, where the late Mrs. Cawse was also an actress.

The suite next the Angel was occupied by the mother and sister of Charles and Thomas Dibdin; during the management of the Wells by the former, the sister, a short squab figure, generally the last among the figurantes, came on among villagers and mobs: but under other lessees was not employed, and died

and the meeting was consequently by no means an agreeable one to him; for if he had chanced to set eyes upon Miss Hughes, great mischief-making and turmoil would be the inevitable consequence.

"In the name of wonder, Grimaldi," said this agreeable character, "what are you doing here?"

"Going back to London," replied Grimaldi, "as I suppose most of us are."

"That is not what I meant," said De Cleve: "what I meant was, to ask you what business might have taken you to Gravesend?"

"Oh! no business at all," replied the other: "directly I landed, I went off by the tide-coach to Chatham."

"Indeed!" said the other.

"Yes," said Grimaldi.

The treasurer looked rather puzzled at this, sufficiently showing by his manner that he had been hunting about Gravesend all day in search of the young man. He remained silent a short time, and then said, "I only asked because I thought you might have had a dinner engagement at Gravesend, perhaps,—with a young lady, even. Who knows?"

This little sarcasm on the part of the worthy treasurer convinced Grimaldi, that having somewhere picked up the information that Miss Hughes was at Gravesend, and having heard afterwards from Mrs. Lewis, or somebody at the theatre, that Grimaldi was going to the same place, he had followed him thither with the amiable intention of playing the spy, and watching his proceedings. If he had observed the young people together, his mischievous intentions would have been completely successful; but the tide-coach had balked him, and Mr. De Cleve's good-natured arrangements were futile.

had not seen them together, in the absence of any reply from Mr. De Cleve, he ascended to the deck, and left the treasurer to his meditations.

Upon the deck, on a green bench with a back to it, and arms besides, there sat a neighbour, and a neighbour's wife, and the neighbour's wife's sister, and a very pretty girl, who was the neighbour's wife's sister's friend. There was just room for one more on the bench, and they insisted upon Mr. Grimaldi occupying the vacant seat, which he readily did, for they were remaining on deck to avoid the closeness of the cabin, and he preferred the cold air of the night to the cold heart of Mr. De Cleve.

So down he sat next to the pretty friend ; and the pretty friend being wrapped in a very large seaman's coat, it was suggested by the neighbour, who was a wag in his way, that she ought to lend a bit of it to Mr. Grimaldi, who looked very cold. After a great deal of blushing and giggling, the young lady put her left arm through the left arm of the coat, and Grimaldi put his right arm through the right arm of the coat, to the great admiration of the whole party, and after the manner in which they show the giants' coats at the fairs. They sat in this way during the whole voyage, and Grimaldi always declared that it was a very comfortable way of travelling, as no doubt it is.

"Laugh away !" he said, as the party gave vent to their delight in bursts of merriment. "If we had only something here to warm us internally as well as the great-coat does externally, we would laugh all night."

"What should you recommend for that purpose?" asked the neighbour.

"Brandy," said the friend.

bottle, with an inverted drinking-horn resting on the bung; and having laughed very much at his own forethought, he set the stone bottle down, and sat himself on the top of it.

It was the only thing wanting to complete the mirth of the party, and very merry they were. It was a fine moonlight night, cold, but healthy and fresh, and it passed pleasantly and quickly away. The day had broken before they reached Billingsgate-stairs; the stone-bottle was empty, the neighbour asleep, Grimaldi and the young lady buttoned up in the great-coat, and the wife and daughter very jocose and good-humoured.

Here they parted: the neighbour's family went home in a hackney-coach, and Grimaldi, bidding them good-bye, walked away to Gracechurch-street, not forgetting to thank the young lady for her humanity and compassion.

He had occasion to call at a coach-office in Gracechurch-street; but finding that it was not yet open (for it was very early), and not feeling at all fatigued by his journey, he determined to walk about the city for a couple of hours or so, and then to return to the coach-office. By so doing, he would pass away the time till the office opened, gain an opportunity of looking about him in that part of London, to which he was quite a stranger, and avoid disturbing the family at home until a more seasonable hour. So he made up his mind to walk the two hours away, and turned back for that purpose.

CHAPTER V.

1798.

An extraordinary circumstance concerning himself, with another extraordinary circumstance concerning his grandfather—Specimen of a laconic epistle, and an account of two interviews with Mr. Hughes, in the latter of which a benevolent gentleman is duly rewarded for his trouble—Preparations for his marriage—Fatiguing effects of his exertions at the Theatre.

It was now broad day. The sun had risen, and was shedding a fine mild light over the quiet street. The crowd so soon to be let loose upon them was not yet stirring, and the only people visible were the passengers who had landed from the boats, or who had just entered London by other early conveyances. Although he had lived in London all his life, he knew far less about it than many country people who have visited it once or twice ; and so unacquainted was he with the particular quarter of the city in which he found himself, that he had never even seen the Tower of London. He walked down to look at that ; and then he stared at the buildings round about, and the churches, and a thousand objects which no one but a loiterer ever bestows a glance upon ; and so was walking on pleasantly enough, when all at once he struck his foot against something which was lying on the pavement.

Looking down to see what it was, he perceived, to his great surprise, a richly-ornamented net purse, of a very large size, filled with gold coin.

within sight, he picked up the purse and thrust it into his pocket.

As he stooped for this purpose, he observed, lying on the ground on very nearly the same spot, a small bundle of papers tied round with a piece of string. He picked them up too, mechanically. What was his astonishment, on examining this last discovery more narrowly, to find that the bundle was composed exclusively of bank-notes !

There was still nobody to be seen : there were no passers-by, no sound of footsteps in the adjacent streets. He lingered about the spot for more than an hour, eagerly scrutinizing the faces of the people, who now began passing to and fro, with looks which themselves almost seemed to inquire whether they had lost anything. No ! there was no inquiry, no searching ; no person ran distractedly past him, or groped among the mud by the pavement's side. It was evidently of no use waiting there ; and, quite tired of doing so, he turned and walked slowly back to the coach-office in Gracechurch-street. He met or overtook no person on the road who appeared to have lost anything, far less the immense sum of money (for such it appeared to him) that he had found.

All this time, and for hours afterwards, he was in a state of turmoil and agitation almost inconceivable. He felt as if he had committed some dreadful theft, and feared discovery, and the shameful punishment which must follow it. His legs trembled beneath him so that he could scarcely walk, his heart beat violently, and the perspiration started on his face.

The more he reflected upon the precise nature of his situation, the more distressed and apprehensive he became. Suppose the

passed through his mind, he was more than once tempted to draw the money from his pocket, fling it on the pavement, and take to his heels; which he was only restrained from doing by reflecting, that if he were observed and questioned, his answers might at once lead him to be accused of a charge of robbery, in which case he would be as badly off as if he were in the grasp of the real loser. It would appear at first sight a very lucky thing to find such a purse; but Grimaldi thought himself far from fortunate as these torturing thoughts filled his mind.

When he got to Gracechurch-street, he found the coach-office still closely shut, and turning towards home through Coleman-street and Finsbury-square, he passed into the City-road, which then, with the exception of a few houses in the immediate neighbourhood of the Angel at Islington, was entirely lined on both sides with the grounds of market-gardeners. This was a favourable place to count the treasure; so, sitting down upon a bank in a retired spot, just where the Eagle Tavern now stands, he examined his prize. The gold in the purse was all in guineas. The whole contents of the bundle were in bank-notes, varying in their amounts from five to fifty pounds each. And this was all there was; no memorandum, no card, no scrap of paper, no document of any kind whatever, afforded the slightest clue to the name or residence of the owner. Besides the money, there was nothing but the piece of string which kept the notes together, and the handsome silk net purse before mentioned, which held the gold.

He could not count the money then, for his fingers trembled so that he could scarcely separate the notes, and he was so confused and bewildered that he could not reckon the gold. He

withstanding all these precautions, notwithstanding the publicity that was given to the advertisement, and notwithstanding that the announcement was frequently repeated,—from that hour to the very last moment of his life, Grimaldi never heard one word or syllable regarding the treasure he had so singularly acquired ; nor was he ever troubled with any one application relative to the notice.

A somewhat similar circumstance occurred to his maternal grandfather.* He was in the habit of attending Leadenhall Market early every Thursday morning, and as he frequently made large purchases, his purse was generally well lined. Upon one occasion, he took with him nearly four hundred pounds, principally in gold and silver, which formed a tolerably large bagful, the weight of which rather impeded his progress. When he arrived near the Royal Exchange, he found that his shoe had become unbuckled, and taking from his pocket the bag, which would otherwise have prevented his stooping, (for he was a corpulent man), he placed it upon a neighbouring post, and then proceeded to adjust his buckle. This done, he went quietly on to market, thinking nothing of the purse or its contents until some time afterwards, when, having to pay for a heavy purchase, he missed it, and after some consideration recollected the place where he had left it. He hurried to the spot. Although more than three quarters of an hour had elapsed since he had left it in the prominent situation already described, there it remained safe and untouched on the top of the post in the open street !

Four anxious days (he had both money and a wife at stake) passed heavily away, but on the fifth, Saturday—a reply arrived from Mr. Hughes, which being probably one of the shortest epistles ever received through the hands of the general postman,

“Expect to see me in a few days.

“Yours truly,

“R. HUGHES.”

If there was nothing decidedly favourable to be drawn from this brief *morceau*, there was at least nothing very appalling to his hopes: it was evident that Mr. Hughes was not greatly offended at his presumption, and probable that he might be eventually induced to give his consent to Grimaldi's marriage with his daughter. This conclusion, to which he speedily came, tended greatly to elevate his spirits; nor did they meet with any check from the sudden appearance of Miss Hughes from Gravesend.

The meeting was a joyful one on both sides. As soon as their mutual greetings were over, he showed her her father's letter, of which she appeared to take but little notice.

“Why, Maria!” he exclaimed, with some surprise, “you scarcely look upon this letter, and seem to care little or nothing about it!”

“To tell you the truth, Joe,” answered Miss Hughes, smiling, “my father has already arrived in town: I found him at home when I got there two or three hours back, and he desired me to tell you that he wishes to see you on Monday morning, if you will call at the theatre.”

Upon hearing this, all the old nervous symptoms returned, and he felt as though he were about to receive a final death-blow to his hopes.

“You may venture to take courage, I think,” said Miss Hughes; “I have very little fear or doubt upon the subject.”

Her admirer had a good deal of both; but he was somewhat re-assured by the young lady's manner, and her conviction that her father, who had always treated her most kindly and indul-

it, they spent the remainder of the day happily enough, and looked forward as calmly as they could to the Monday which was to decide their fate.

The following day—Sunday—was rather a wearisome one, being occupied with speculations as to what the morrow would bring forth. However, long as it seemed, the night arrived at last; and though that was long too, Monday morning succeeded it as usual.

Concealing his inward agitation as best he might, he walked to the theatre, and there in the treasury found Mr. Hughes. He was received very kindly, but, after some trivial conversation, was much astonished by Mr. Hughes saying, “So you are going to leave Sadler’s Wells, and all your old friends, merely because you can get a trifle more elsewhere,—eh, Joe?”

He was so amazed at this, he could scarcely speak, but quickly recovering, said, “I can assure you, sir, that no such idea ever entered my head;—in fact, even if I wished such a thing, which, Heaven knows, is furthest from my thoughts! I could not do so, being under articles to you.”

“You forget,” replied Mr. Hughes, somewhat sternly, “your articles have expired here.”

And so they had, and so he had forgotten, and so he was constrained to confess.

“It is rather odd,” continued Mr. Hughes, “that so important a circumstance should have escaped your memory: but tell me, do you know Mr. Cross?”

Mr. Cross was manager of the Circus, now the Surrey Theatre, and had repeatedly made Grimaldi offers to leave Sadler’s Wells, and join his company. He had done so, indeed, only a

which it was made, it was obvious to him that some one had endeavoured to injure him in that gentleman's opinion ; and fortunately chancing to have in his pocket-book the letters he had received from Mr. Cross, and copies of his own replies, he lost no time in clearing himself of the charge.

"My dear sir," he said, "I do not know Mr. Cross personally, but very well as a correspondent, inasmuch as he has repeatedly written, offering engagements to me, all of which I have declined ;" and he placed the papers before him.

The perusal of these letters seemed to satisfy Mr. Hughes, who returned them, and said smilingly, "Well then, we'll talk about a fresh engagement here, as you prefer old quarters. Let me see : your salary is now four pounds per week :—well, I will engage you for three seasons, and the terms shall be these : for the first season, six pounds per week ; for the second, seven ; and for the third, eight. Will that do ?"

He readily agreed to a proposition which, handsome in itself, greatly exceeded anything he had anticipated. As Mr. Hughes seemed anxious to have the affair settled, and Grimaldi was perfectly content that it should be, two witnesses were sent for, and the articles were drawn up, and signed upon the spot.

Then again they were left alone, and after a few moments more of desultory conversation, Mr. Hughes rose, saying, "I shall see you, I suppose, in the evening, as I am going to Drury Lane to see Blue Beard." He advanced towards the door as he spoke, and then suddenly turning round, added, "Have you anything else to say to me ?"

Now was the time, or never. Screwing his courage to the sticking-place, Grimaldi proceeded to place before Mr. Hughes his hopes and prospects, strongly urging that his own happiness

fears had prophesied ; he urged the youth of both parties as an argument against acceding to their wishes, but finally gave his consent, and by so doing transported the lover with joy.

Mr. Hughes advanced to the door of the room, and throwing it open, as he went out, said to his daughter, who chanced to be sitting in the next room, "Maria, Joe is here : you had better come and welcome him."

Miss Hughes came like a dutiful daughter, and *did* welcome her faithful admirer, as he well deserved for his true-hearted and constant affection. In the happiness of the moment, the fact that the door of the room was standing wide open quite escaped the notice of both, who never once recollected the possibility of any third person being an unseen witness to the interview.

This was a red-letter day in Grimaldi's calendar ; he had nothing to do in the evening at Drury Lane until the last scene but one of Blue Beard, so went shopping with his future wife, buying divers articles of plate, and such other small wares as young housekeepers require.

On hurrying to the theatre at night, he found Mr. Hughes anxiously regarding the machinery of the last scene in Blue Beard, which he was about getting up at the Exeter Theatre.

"This machinery is very intricate, Joe," said the father-in-law upon seeing him.

"You are right, sir," replied Joe ; "and, what is more, it works very badly."

"So I should expect," was the reply ; "and as I am afraid we shall not manage this very well in the country, I wish I could improve it."

At the time of his death he had many excellent models of this description, besides several which he sold to Mr. Bunn so recently as a few months prior to December, 1836, all of which were used in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Gammer Gurton," produced at Drury Lane on the 26th of that month. He rarely allowed any machinery which came under his notice, especially if a little peculiar, to pass without modelling it upon a small scale. He had a complete model of the skeleton "business" in Blue Beard; and not merely that, but an improvement of his own besides, by which the intricate nature of the change might be avoided, and many useless flaps dispensed with.

Nervously anxious to elevate himself as much as possible in the opinion of Mr. Hughes at this particular juncture, he eagerly explained to him the nature of his alterations, as far as the models were concerned, and plainly perceived he was agreeably surprised at the communication. He begged his acceptance of models, both of the original mechanism, and of his own improved version of it; and Mr. Hughes, in reply, invited him to breakfast on the following morning, and requested him to bring both models with him. This he failed not to do. It happened that a rather ludicrous scene awaited him.

He had one or two enemies connected at that time with Sadler's Wells, who allowed their professional envy to impel them to divers acts of small malignity. One of these persons, having been told of his saluting Miss Hughes, by a servant girl with whom he chanced to be acquainted, and who had witnessed the action, sought and obtained an interview that evening with the father upon his return from Drury Lane, and stated the circumstance to him, enlarging and embellishing the details with divers comments upon the ingratitude of Grimaldi in seducing

astonished the speaker, but which he eventually attributed to concentrated rage. After he had finished his speech, the former quietly said, "Will you favour me by coming here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, sir?"

"Most certainly," was the reply.

"Allow me, however, at once," continued Mr. Hughes, "to express my thanks for your kindness in informing me of that which so nearly concerns my domestic happiness. Will you take a glass of madeira?"

"I thank you, sir," answered the other.

The wine was brought and drunk, and the friend departed, congratulating himself, as he walked away, upon having "settled Joe's business;" which indeed he had, but not after the fashion he expected or intended.

As to Grimaldi, he was up with the lark, arranging the machinery and making it look and work to the best advantage; in which having succeeded to his heart's content, he put the models he had promised Mr. Hughes into his pocket, and walked down to his house to breakfast, agreeably to the arrangement of the night before.

Upon his arrival, he was told that breakfast was not quite ready, and likewise that Mr. Hughes wished to see him immediately in the treasury, where he was then awaiting his arrival. There was something in the manner of the servant-girl (the same, by-the-by, who had told of the kissing), as she said this, which induced him involuntarily to fear some ill, and, without knowing exactly why, he began to apprehend those thousand and one impossible, or at least improbable, evils, the dread of which torments the man nervously afraid of losing some treasure upon the possession of which his happiness depends.

vanced to the appointed chamber, and in two minutes found himself in the presence of Mr. Hughes and his accuser.

The former received him coldly; the latter turned away when he saw him without vouchsafing a word.

"Come in, sir," said Mr. Hughes, "and close the door after you." He did as he was told; never, either before or afterwards, feeling so strangely like a criminal.

"Mr. Grimaldi," continued Mr. Hughes, with a mingled formality and solemnity which appalled him, "I have something very important to communicate to you—in fact, I have had a charge preferred against you of a most serious description, sir."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes, indeed, sir!" said the enemy, with a look very like one of triumph.

"It is true," replied Mr. Hughes, "and I fear you will not be able to clear yourself from it: however, in justice to you, the charge shall be fully stated in your own presence. Repeat, sir, if you please," he continued, addressing the accuser, "what you told me last night."

And repeat it he did, in a speech, replete with malignity, and not destitute of oratorical merit: in which he dwelt upon the serpent-like duplicity with which young Grimaldi had stolen into the bosom of a happy and hospitable family for the purpose of robbing a father and mother of their beloved daughter, and dragging down from her own respectable sphere a young and inexperienced girl, to visit her with all the sorrows consequent upon limited means, and the needy home of a struggling actor.

It was with inexpressible astonishment that he heard all this;

vouchsafing an encouraging nod to the speaker, which was anything but encouraging to the other party.

"You are quite right," said Mr. Hughes, at length; on hearing which, Grimaldi felt quite wrong. "You are *quite* right—nothing can justify such actions, except one thing, and that is—"

"Mr. Hughes," interrupted the *friend*, "I know your kind heart well,—so well, that I can perceive your charitable feelings are even now striving to discover some excuse or palliation for this offence; but permit me, as a disinterested observer, to tell you that nothing can justify a man in winning the affections of a young girl infinitely above him, and, at the same time, the daughter of one to whom he is so greatly indebted."

"Will you listen to me for half a minute?" inquired Mr. Hughes, in a peculiarly calm tone.

"Certainly, sir," answered the other.

"Well, then, I was going to observe, at the moment when you somewhat rudely interrupted me, that I quite agreed with you, and that nothing can justify a man in acting in the manner you have described, unless, indeed, he has obtained the sanction of the young lady's parents; in which case, he is, of course, at liberty to win her affections as soon as he likes, and she likes to let him."

"Assuredly, sir," responded the other; "but in the present instance—"

"But in the present instance," interrupted Mr. Hughes, "that happens to be the case. My daughter Maria has my full permission to marry Mr. Grimaldi; and I have no doubt she will avail herself of that permission in the course of a very few weeks."

on-in-law with a grave face, but through all the gravity of which he could perceive a struggling smile,—“Nevertheless, you acted very wrong, Mr. Grimaldi, in kissing my daughter so publicly ; and I beg that whenever, for the future, you and she deem it essential to indulge in such amusements, it may be done in private. This is rendered necessary by the laws which at present govern society, and I am certain will be far more consonant to the feelings and delicacy of the young lady in question.”

With these words Mr. Hughes made a low bow to the officious and disinterested individual who had made the speech, and, opening the door, called to the servants “to show the gentleman out.” Then turning to Grimaldi, he took him by the arm, and walked towards the breakfast-room, declaring that the meal had been waiting half an hour or more, that the coffee would be cold, and Maria quite tired of waiting for him.

From this moment the course of true love ran smooth for once : and Mr. Hughes, in all his subsequent behaviour to Grimaldi sufficiently evinced his high sense of the innate worth of a young man, who, under very adverse circumstances and with many temptations to contend against, had behaved with so much honesty and candour.

On the Saturday after this pleasant termination of a scene which threatened to be attended with very different results, the house in Penton-street was taken possession of, and next Easter Sunday the young couple were asked in church for the first time. Sadler’s Wells opened as usual on Easter Monday,* and

* Sadler’s Wells, on Easter Monday, April 9, 1798, opened with a Prelude, entitled, “Easter Monday ; or, a Peep at the Wells.” The prolocutory characters by Dubois and Mrs. Davis : in the concluding scene were introduced the whole Company, and a Ballet Divertissement : the dances by the Misses

siderably.

At this time, in consequence of his great exertions in this character, after four or five months of comparative rest, he began to feel some of those wastings of strength and prostrations of energy, to which this class of performers are more peculiarly exposed, and which leave them, if they attain old age, as they left Grimaldi himself, in a state of great bodily infirmity and suffering. He was cheered throughout the play; but the applause of the audience only spirited him to increased exertions, and at the close of the performances he was so exhausted and worn out that he could scarcely stand. It was with great difficulty that he reached his home, although the distance was so very slight; and immediately on doing so, he was obliged to be put to bed.

He was wont in after-life frequently to remark, that if at one period of his career his gains were great, his labours were at least equally so, and deserved the return. He spoke from sad experience of their effects at that time, and he spoke the truth. It must be a very high salary, indeed, that could ever repay a

or, Harlequin and the Fay." Principal characters by Mr. King, Mr. Grimaldi, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Dubois, Miss Bruguier, and Mrs. Roffey. Joe for the first time, on the bill of the day, has the honourable distinction of Mr. prefixed to his name; hitherto it was "Master Grimaldi." On Monday, July 30, was produced a new Grand Comic Spectacle and Harlequinade, called "Blue Beard, Black Beard, Red Beard, and Grey Beard;" in which the motley hero of Pantomime, it was announced, would respectfully endeavour to keep up the spirit of the old English adage,

"'Tis merry in Hall, when Beards wag all,"

in the novel character of Harlequin Dutch Skipper. Harlequin Skipper, Mr. King; Plutus, Blue Beard, Mr. Barnett; Mars, Black Beard, Mr. Davis; Saturn, Grey Beard, Mr. Grimaldi; Mynheer Red Beard, Mr. Gomery; Dutch Clown, Mr. Dubois; and Columbine, Miss Bruguier. The Pantomime was

man—and especially a feeling, sensitive man, as Grimaldi really was—for premature old age and early decay.

He awoke at eleven o'clock next day invigorated and refreshed;—this long rest was an extraordinary indulgence for him to take, for it was his constant habit to be up and dressed by seven o'clock or earlier, either attending to his pigeons, practising the violin, occupying himself in constructing such little models as have been before mentioned, or employing himself in some way. Idleness wearied him more than labour; he never could understand the gratification which many people seem to derive from having nothing to do.

It is customary on the morning after a new piece to “call” it upon the stage with a view of condensing it where it will admit of condensation, and making such improvements as the experience of one night may have suggested. All the performers engaged in the piece of course attend these “calls,” as any alterations will necessarily affect the dialogue of their parts, or some portions of the stage business connected with them.

Being one of the principal actors in the new drama, it was indispensably necessary that he should attend, and accordingly, much mortified at finding it so late, he dressed with all possible despatch, and set forth towards the theatre.

CHAPTER VI.

1798.

Tribulations connected with "Old Lucas," the constable, with an account of the subsequent proceedings before Mr. Blamire, the magistrate, at Hatton Garden, and the mysterious appearance of a silver staff—A guinea wager with a jocose friend on the Dartford-road—The Prince of Wales, Sheridan, and the Crockery Girl.

AT this time all the ground upon which Claremont, Myddleton, Lloyd, and Wilmington Squares have since been built, together with the numberless streets which diverge from them in all directions, was then pasture-land or garden-ground, bearing the name of Sadler's Wells Fields. Across these fields it was of course necessary that Grimaldi should pass and repass in going to and returning from the theatre. Upon this particular morning, a mob, consisting of at least a thousand persons, were actively engaged here in hunting an over-driven ox,—a diversion then in very high repute among the lower orders of the metropolis, but which is now, happily for the lives and limbs of the more peaceable part of the community, falling into desuetude: there not being quite so many open spaces or waste grounds to chase oxen in, as there used to be a quarter of a century ago. The mob was a very dense one, comprised of the worst characters; and perceiving that it would be a task of some difficulty to clear a passage through it, he paused for a minute or two, deliberating whether he had not better turn back at once and take the longer but less obstructed route by

"Yes, sir, it is," replied the other. "Pray, may I inquire why you ask the question?"

"Because," answered the stranger, pointing to a man who stood among a little group of people hard by,—“because I just now heard that gentleman mention it to a companion.”

The person whom the young man pointed out was a very well known character about Clerkenwell and its vicinity, being an object of detestation with the whole of the neighbourhood. This man was Lucas,—“Old Lucas” was his familiar appellation,—and he filled the imposing office of parish constable. Parish constables are seldom very popular in their own districts, but Old Lucas was more unpopular than any man of the same class; and if the stories which are current of him be correct, with very good reason, unless the man was dreadfully belied. In short, he was a desperate villain. It was very generally understood of him, that where no real accusation existed against a man, his course of proceeding was to invent a false one, and to bolster it up with the most unblushing perjury, and an ingenious system of false evidence, which he had never any difficulty in obtaining, for the purpose of pocketing certain small sums which, under the title of “expenses,” were paid upon the conviction of the culprit.

Being well acquainted with this man’s reputation, Grimaldi was much astonished, and not at all pleasantly so, by the information he had just received; and he inquired with considerable anxiety and apprehension, whether the young man was quite certain that it was *his* name which the constable had mentioned.

“Quite certain,” was the reply. “I can’t have made any mistake upon the subject, because he wrote it down in his book.”

“Wrote it down in his book!” exclaimed Grimaldi.

you for your kindness in informing me, although I am not much wiser on the point than I was before."

Exchanging bows with the stranger, they separated; the young man mixing with the crowd, and Grimaldi turning back, and going to the theatre by the longest road, with the double object of avoiding Old Lucas and keeping out of the way of the mad ox.

Having to attend to his business immediately on his arrival at the theatre, the circumstance escaped his memory, nor did it occur to him again until he returned thither in the evening, shortly before the performances commenced, when being reminded of it by some accidental occurrence, he related the morning's conversation to some of his more intimate associates, among whom were Dubois, a celebrated comic actor, another performer of the name of Davis, and Richer, a very renowned rope-dancer. His communication, however, elicited no more sympathetic reception than a general burst of laughter, which having subsided, they fell to bantering the unfortunate object of Old Lucas's machinations.

"That tellow Lucas," said Dubois, assuming a grave face, "is a most confirmed scoundrel; he would stick at nothing, not even at Joe's life, to gain a few pounds, or perhaps even a few shillings."

Joe looked none the happier for this observation, and another friend took up the subject.

"Lucas,—Lucas," said Richer; "that is the old man who wears spectacles, isn't it?"

"That's the man," replied Dubois; "the constable, you know. He hasn't written your name down in his book for nothing, Joe, take my word for that."

vent to sundry other terrible surmises upon the particular crime with which the officer meant to charge him; one suggesting that it was murder, another that he thought it was forgery, (which made no great difference in the end, the offence being punished with the same penalty,) and a third good-naturedly remarking that perhaps it might not be quite so bad, after all, although certainly Lucas did possess such weight with the magistrates, that it was invariably two to one against the unfortunate person whom he charged with any offence.

Although he was at no loss to discern and appreciate the raillery of his friends, Grimaldi could not divest himself of some nervous apprehensions connected with the adventure of the morning: when, just as he was revolving in his mind all the improbabilities of the officer's entertaining any designs against him, one of the messengers of the theatre abruptly entered the room in which they were all seated, and announced that Mr. Grimaldi was wanted directly at the stage-door.

"Who wants me?" inquired Grimaldi, turning rather pale.

"It's a person in spectacles," replied the messenger, looking at the rest of the company, and hesitating.

"A person in spectacles!" echoed the other, more agitated than before. "Did he give you his name, or do you know who he is?"

"O yes, I know who he is," answered the messenger, with * something between a smile and a gasp:—"it's Old Lucas."

Upon this, there arose a roar of laughter, in which the messenger joined. Grimaldi was quite petrified, and stood rooted to the spot, looking from one to another with a face in which dismay and fear were visibly depicted.

Having exhausted themselves with laughing, his companions, regarding his unhappy face, began to grow serious, and Dubois said

ourselves your friends, and support you against this old rascal in any way in our power."

All the others said something of the same sort, for which Grimaldi thanked them very heartily, being really in a state of great discomfort, and entertaining many dismal forebodings. It was then proposed that everybody present should accompany him in a body to the stage-door, and be witnesses to anything that the thief-taker had to say or do; it being determined beforehand that in the event of his being insolent, he should be summarily put into the New River. Accordingly, they went down in a body, bearing Joe in the centre; and sure enough at the door stood Old Lucas *in propria persona*.

"Now, then, what's the matter?" said the leader of the guard; upon which Grimaldi summoned up courage, and echoing the inquiry, said, "What's the matter?" too.

"You must come with me to Hatton Garden," said the constable, in a gruff voice. "Come, I can't afford to lose any more time."

Here arose a great outcry, mingled with various exclamations of, "Where's your warrant?" and many consignments of Mr. Lucas to the warmest of all known regions.

"Where's your warrant?" cried Davis, when the noise had in some measure subsided.

The officer deigned no direct reply to this inquiry, but looking at Grimaldi, demanded whether he was ready; in answer to which question the whole party shouted "No!" with tremendous emphasis.

"Look here, Lucas," said Dubois, stepping forward; "you are an old scoundrel!—no one knows that better, or perhaps could prove it easier, than I. Now, so far as concerns Mr. Grimaldi,

by the speaker's companions, but by several idlers who had gathered round.

"I'm not a-talking to you, Mr. Dubois," said Lucas, as soon as he could make himself heard;—"Mr. Grimaldi's my man. Now, sir, will you come along with me?"

"Not without a warrant," said the rope-dancer.

"Not without a warrant," added Davis.

"Not upon any consideration whatever," said Dubois.

"Don't attempt to touch him without a warrant; or—"

"Or what?" inquired Lucas; "or what, Mr. Dubois? ch, sir!"

The answer was lost in a general chorus of "The River!"

This intimation, pronounced in a very determined manner, had a visible effect upon the officer, who at once assuming a more subdued tone, said,

"Fact is, that I've not got a warrant; (a shout of derision;) fact is, it's not often that I'm asked for warrants, because people generally knows that I'm in authority, and thinks that's sufficient. (Another.) However, if Mr. Grimaldi and his friends press the objection, I shall not urge his going with me now, provided he promises and they promises on his behalf to attend at Hatton Garden Office, afore Mr. Blamire, at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

This compromise was at once acceded to, and Old Lucas turned to go away; but he did not entirely escape even upon this occasion, for while the above conversation was going forward at the door, the muster of people collected around had increased to a pretty large concourse. The greater part of them knew by sight both Grimaldi and the constable; and as the latter was about to depart, the lookers-on pressed round him, and a voice from the crowd cried out, "What's the matter, Joe?"

"The matter is this, gentlemen," said Dubois, returning to

“What for?—what for?” cried the crowd.

“For doing nothing at all, gentlemen,” replied the orator, who had reserved the loudest key of his voice for the concluding point.

This announcement was at once received with a general yell, which caused the constable to quicken his pace very considerably. The mob quickened theirs also, and in a few seconds the whole area of Sadler’s Wells yard rang with whoops and yells almost as loud as those which had assailed the ox in the morning; and Mr. Lucas made the best of his way to his dwelling, amidst a shower of mud, rotten apples, and other such missiles. The performances in the theatre went off as usual. After all was over, Grimaldi returned home to supper, having been previously assured by his friends that they would one and all accompany him to the Police-office in the morning, and having previously arranged so as to secure as a witness the young gentleman who had given the first information regarding the views and intentions of the worthy thief-taker.

At the appointed hour, Grimaldi and his friends repaired to the Police-office, and were duly presented to Mr. Blamire, the sitting magistrate, who, having received them with much politeness, requested Old Lucas, who was then and there in attendance, to state his case, which he forthwith proceeded to do.

He deposed, with great steadiness of nerve, that Joseph Grimaldi had been guilty of hunting, and inciting and inducing other persons to hunt, an over-driven ox, in the fields of Pentonville, much to the hazard and danger of his Majesty’s subjects, much to the worry and irritation of the animal, and greatly to the hazard of his being lashed into a state of furious insanity. Mr. Lucas deposed to having seen with his own eyes the offence

cumstances as they had actually occurred, and produced his young acquaintance, who, as it appeared, was the son of a most respectable gentleman in the neighbourhood. The young gentleman confirmed the account of the affair which had been given last; deposed to the accused not having been in the field more than two or three minutes altogether; to his never having been near the ox-hunters; and to his having gone to the theatre by a route much longer than his ordinary one, for the express purpose of avoiding the ox and his hunters, Mr. Lucas and his companions.

The magistrate heard all this conflicting evidence upon an apparently very unimportant question, with a great deal more patience and coolness than some of his successors have been in the habit of displaying; and after hearing it, and various audible and unreserved expressions of opinions from Mr. Dubois, and others, touching the respectability and probity of Lucas, turned to the accused, and said—

“ Mr. Grimaldi, I entirely believe your version of the affair to be the correct and true one; but I am bound to act upon the deposition of this constable and his witnesses, and accordingly I must, however unwillingly, convict you in some penalty. I shall take care, though, that your punishment is one which shall neither be heavy to you nor serviceable to the complainant. I hereby order you to pay a fine of five shillings, and to be discharged. As to you, Lucas, I would recommend you to be careful how you conduct yourself in future, and more especially to be careful as to the facts which you state upon oath.”

After this decision, which his friends and himself looked upon as a complete triumph, they bowed to the magistrate and quitted the Police-office, Grimaldi previously paying the five shillings which he had been fined, and his addition to the

Prussia (now bearing the sign of the Clown), opposite Sadler's Wells theatre, for the purpose of having some lunch; and thither they proceeded, and made themselves very merry with the mortified looks of Old Lucas, mingling with their mirth some dry and abstruse speculations upon the nature of the laws which compelled a magistrate to accept the oath of a reputed perjurer, and to convict upon it a person whom he conscientiously believed to be innocent of the offence laid to his charge.

While they were thus engaged, some person came running into the room, and, looking hastily round, cried, "Joe! Joe! here's Old Lucas again." The friends began to laugh, and Grimaldi joined them, thinking that this was but a jest; but he was greatly mistaken, for in less than a minute Lucas entered the room.

"Why, Mister Constable!" exclaimed Dubois, rising angrily; "how dare you come here?"

"Because I have business," surlily replied Lucas. "Mr. Grimaldi has been very properly convicted of an offence at the Police-office, and sentenced to pay a fine of five shillings, besides one shilling more for his discharge: neither of these sums has he paid, so he is still my prisoner."

"Not paid?" exclaimed the accused. "Why, I paid the six shillings before I left the office."

This statement was corroborated by the friends, and the mute but eloquent testimony of his purse, which contained precisely that sum less than it had done an hour previously.

"It's no use," said Lucas, grinning: "pay the money, or come on with me."

"I have already paid all that was required, and I will neither give you another farthing, nor allow myself to be made

Not a bit daunted, Old Lucas darted upon him, dragged him from his seat, and attempted to force him towards the door ; in doing which he managed to tear his waistcoat and shirt-collar literally to ribands. Until then he had remained quite cool, merely acting upon the defensive ; but now he gave way to his rage, and fulfilled his threat to the letter by giving him a blow which felled him to the ground, and caused his nose to bleed in a manner neither sentimental nor picturesque.

He, however, immediately rose again, and producing his staff, was about, thus strengthened, to renew the combat, when a gentleman who chanced to be sitting in the room, a stranger to the party, rose, and drawing from his pocket a silver staff, shook it at Lucas, and said, "I will have no more of this violence ! Let all parties adjourn to the Police-office ; and if Mr. Grimaldi's tale be true, and your purpose be merely that of endeavouring to extort money, as I have no doubt it is, I will take care that things be laid properly before the magistrate."

Lucas, who appeared to succumb before the vision of the silver staff, surlily assented, and they all presently presented themselves for the second time that day before Mr. Blamire, who was greatly astonished at their reappearance, and greatly surprised at the altered appearance of Old Lucas's face. The magistrate, moreover, seemed to know the silver-staffed gentleman very well, and greeted him cordially.

"Well," said Mr. Blamire, after the bustle of entrance had ceased, "what's the matter, now ? Speak, you, Lucas !"

"Your worship," said the person called upon, "Mr. Grimaldi was fined five shillings just now, and had to pay one for his discharge, all of which he left the office without doing."

"Indeed!—is that true?" inquired the magistrate of the

Lucas was a little abashed at the "aside" confab between the magistrate and his clerk ; but, affecting not to hear it, he continued, "Of course, therefore, he still remained my prisoner ; and I followed him, and insisted upon his paying the money. This he refused : I therefore collared him, for the purpose of making him return here, and in so doing I tore his shirt and waistcoat. The moment he perceived I had done so, he——"

Lucas paused for an instant, and Mr. Blamire filled up the sentence by saying—

"He gave you a blow on the nose?"

"Exactly so, sir," said Lucas, eagerly.

"And very well you merited it," added the magistrate, in a tone which caused a general roar of laughter. "Well, Mr. Grimaldi, let us hear what *you* have to say."

He briefly recounted the circumstances ; and when he had finished, the unknown with the silver staff advanced and corroborated the statement, making several severe remarks upon the private intentions and violent manner of Lucas.

"Who," says Grimaldi, with profound respect and an air of great mystery,— "Who this gentleman was, I never could ascertain ; but that he was a person possessing a somewhat high degree of authority was evident to me from the great respect paid to him at the Police-office. Some one afterwards told me he was a city marshal, possessing power to exercise his authority without the city ; but I know not whether he was so or not."

After this disguised potentate had given his testimony, which rendered the matter conclusive, Mr. Blamire said, "Place Lucas at the bar ;" which being done, the magistrate proceeded to mulct him in a penalty of five pounds, the money to go to the poor of the parish, and likewise ordered him to make

cause of his disaster, and protested, with many disrespectful oaths and other ebullitions of anger, that he would not pay one farthing; upon which the magistrate, nothing daunted, commanded him to be locked up forthwith, which was done to the great delight and admiration, not only of the friends and other spectators, but of the officers also, who, besides being in duty bound to express their admiration of all the magistrate did, participated in the general dislike of Old Lucas, as the persons best acquainted with his perjury and villany.

The friends once again bade the magistrate good morning, and soon afterwards dispersed to their several homes. They heard next day that Old Lucas, after having been under lock and key for six hours, the whole of which time he devoted to howls and imprecations, paid the fine. A few hours after he was set at liberty, he wrote a very penitent letter to Grimaldi, expressing his great regret for what had occurred, and his readiness to pay for the spoiled shirt and waistcoat, upon being made acquainted with the amount of damage done. Grimaldi thought it better to let the matter remain where it did, thinking that, setting the broken nose against the torn shirt and waistcoat, Lucas was already sufficiently punished.

And after this, "Old Lucas" never did anything more terrible, connected with the Sadler's Wells company, at least, and, there is reason to believe, shortly afterwards lost his situation. Whether he did so or not is no great matter, further than that he appears to have been a most unfit personage to have been intrusted with any species of authority.

From this time forward, for several months, all went merry as a marriage bell. On the 11th of May following the little adventure just recorded, the marriage bell went too, for he was

Five days after the wedding, the young couple paid their first visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hughes. After sitting a short time, Grimaldi left his wife there and went to the theatre, where a rehearsal in which he was wanted had been called for that morning. Upon entering the yard of Sadler's Wells, in which the different members of the company were strolling about until the rehearsal commenced, he was accosted by Richer, with, "Joe, may I inquire the name of the lady with whom I saw you walking just now?"

"Nay, you need not ask him," cried Dubois; "I can tell you. It was Miss Maria Hughes."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Grimaldi; "that is not the lady's name."

"No!" exclaimed Dubois. "Why, I could have sworn it was Miss Hughes."

"You would have sworn wrong, then," replied he. "The lady's name *was* Hughes once, I grant; but on Friday last I changed it to Grimaldi."

His friends were greatly surprised at this intelligence; but they lost no time in disseminating it throughout the theatre. Congratulations poured in upon him; and so great was the excitement occasioned by the fact of "Joe Grimaldi's marriage" becoming known, that the manager, after vainly endeavouring to proceed with the rehearsal, gave up the task, and dismissed the company for that morning. In the evening they had a supper at the theatre to commemorate the event; and on the following Sunday, Joe gave a dinner to the carpenters of the theatre, for the same purpose. In the long-run all the members of the establishment, from the highest to the lowest, participated in the long-expected happiness of their single-hearted and good-

it. He was acquainted at that time with a very clever and popular writer, who happened to have occasion to pass through Gravesend on the same day as Joe had to go there; and, as they met shortly before, they agreed to travel in a 'post-chaise and share the expense between them. They arranged to start early in the morning, as Grimaldi had to play at Sadler's Wells at night, and did so.

The journey was very pleasant, and the hours passed quickly away. His companion, who was a witty and humorous fellow, was in great force upon the occasion, and, exerting all his powers, kept him laughing without intermission. About three miles on the London side of Dartford, the friend, whose buoyant and restless spirits prevented his sitting in any one position for a minute, began incessantly poking his head out of one or other of the chaise windows, and making various remarks on the landscape, and the persons or vehicles passing to and fro. While thus engaged, he happened to catch sight of a man on horseback, about a quarter of a mile behind, who was travelling in the same direction with themselves, and was coming up after the chaise at a rapid pace.

"Look, Joe!" he said; "see that fellow behind! Well mounted, is he not?"

Grimaldi looked back, and saw the man coming along at a fast trot. He was a stout, hearty fellow, dressed like a small farmer, as he very probably was, and was riding a strong horse, of superior make, good pace, and altogether an excellent roadster.

"Yes, I see him," was his reply. "He's well enough, but I see nothing particular about him or the horse either."

"Nor is there anything particular about either of them that I am aware of," replied the other. "What do you think of that?"

"Most unquestionably ; he will pass us in a few seconds."

"I'll tell you what, Joe, I'll bet you a guinea he does not," said the friend.

"Nonsense !"

"Well, will you take it ?"

"No, no ; it would be robbing you."

"Oh, leave me to judge about that," said the friend ; "I shall not consider it a robbery : and, so far from that, I'm willing to make the bet more in your favour.—Come, I'll bet you a guinea, Joe, that that man don't pass our chaise between this and Dartford."

"Done !" said Grimaldi, well knowing that, unless some sudden and most unaccountable change took place in the pace at which the man was riding, he must pass in a minute or two—
"done !"

"Very good," said the other.—"Stop—I forgot : remember that if you laugh or smile, so that he can see you, between this and Dartford, you will have lost. Is that agreed ?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Grimaldi, very much interested to know by what mode his friend proposed to win the wager,—
"certainly."

He did not remain very long in expectation: the horseman drew nearer and nearer, and the noise of his horse's feet was heard close behind the chaise, when the friend, pulling a pistol from his pocket, suddenly thrust his head and shoulders out of the window and presented the pistol full at the face of the unconscious countryman, assuming at the same time a ferocious countenance and menacing air which were perfectly alarming. Grimaldi was looking through the little window at the back of the chaise, and was like to die with laughter when he witnessed

from the chaise window; which he no sooner beheld, than all at once he pulled up with a jerk which almost brought him into a ditch, and threw the horse upon his haunches. His red face grew very pale, but he had the presence of mind to pat his beast on the neck and soothe him in various ways, keeping his eyes fixed on the chaise all the time and looking greatly astonished. After a minute or so, he recovered himself, and, giving his horse the spur, and a smart cut in the flank with his riding-whip, dashed across the road, with the view of passing the chaise on the opposite side. The probability of this attempt had been foreseen, however, by the other party, for with great agility he transferred himself to the other window, and, thrusting out the pistol with the same fierce and sanguinary countenance as before, again encountered the farmer's gaze; upon which he pulled up, with the same puzzled and frightened expression of countenance, and stared till his eyes seemed double their natural size.

The scene became intensely droll. The countryman's horse stood stock still; but as the chaise rolled on, he gradually suffered him to fall into a gentle trot, and, with an appearance of deep perplexity, was evidently taking council with himself how to act. Grimaldi had laughed in a corner till he was quite exhausted, and seeing his guinea was fairly lost, determined to aid the joke. With this view, he looked out of the vacant window, and, assuming an authoritative look, nodded confidentially to the horseman, and waved his hand as if warning him not to come too near. This caution the countryman received with much apparent earnestness, frequently nodding and waving his hand after the same manner, accompanying the pantomime with divers significant winks, to intimate that he understood the gentleman's meaning, and that he had accidentally missed his



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not an inch of his fierceness, kept the pistol pointed at the countryman; and the countryman followed on behind at an easy pace on the opposite side of the road, continuing to exchange most expressive pantomime with one of its best professors, and to reciprocate, as nearly as he could, all the nods and winks and shrugs with which Grimaldi affected to deplore the situation of his unhappy friend. And so they went into Dartford. When they reached the town, the friend resumed his seat, and Grimaldi paid the guinea. The instant the pistol barrel was withdrawn, the countryman set spurs to his horse, and scoured through the town to the great astonishment of its inhabitants, at full gallop.

The success of this guinea wager put the friend upon telling a story of a wager of Sheridan's which was much talked of at the time, and ran thus :—

George the Fourth, when Prince of Wales, used occasionally to spend certain hours of the day in gazing from the windows of a club-house in St. James's-street:—of course he was always surrounded by some of his chosen companions, and among these Sheridan, who was then the Drury Lane lessee, was ever first and foremost. The Prince and Sheridan in these idle moments had frequently remarked among the passers backwards and forwards, a young woman who regularly every day carried through the street a heavy load of crockery-ware, and who, the Prince frequently remarked, must be possessed of very great strength and dexterity to be able to bear so heavy a burden with so much apparent ease, and to carry it in the midst of such a crowd of passengers without ever stumbling.

One morning, as usual, she made her appearance in the street from Piccadilly, and Sheridan called the Prince's attention to

"Not more so than usual, I think," said the Prince.

"Pardon me, your Highness, I think I'm right. Oh, dear me, yes! it's decidedly a larger basket, a much larger basket," replied Sheridan. "Good God, she staggers under it! Ah! she has recovered herself.—Poor girl, poor girl!"

The Prince had watched the girl very closely, but the symptoms of exhaustion which Sheridan had so feelingly deplored were nevertheless quite invisible to him.

"She will certainly fall," continued Sheridan, in a low abstracted tone; "that girl will fall down before she reaches this house."

"Pooh, pooh!" said the Prince. "*She* fall!—nonsense! she is too well used to it."

"She will," said Sheridan.

"I'll bet you a cool hundred she does not," replied the Prince.

"Done!" cried Sheridan.

"Done!" repeated his Royal Highness.

The point of the story is, that the girl *did fall down just before she reached the club-house*. It was very likely an accident, inasmuch as people seldom fall down on purpose, especially when they carry crockery; but still there were not wanting some malicious persons who pretended to trace the tumble to another source. At all events, it was a curious coincidence, and a strong proof of the accuracy of Sheridan's judgment in such matters, any way.

The friend told this story while they were changing horses, laughing very much when he had finished, as most people's friends do: and, as if it had only whetted his appetite for fun, at once looked out for another object on whom to exercise his

windows of which, on the first floor, a gentleman was gazing into the street. He was a particularly tall, big man, wearing a military frock and immense mustachios, and eyeing the people below with an air of much dignity and grandeur. The jester's eyes no sooner fell upon this personage than he practised a variety of devices to attract his attention, such as coughing violently, sneezing, raising the window of the chaise and letting it fall again with a great noise, and tapping loudly at the door. At length he clapped his hands and accompanied the action with a shrill scream; upon which the big man looked down from his elevation with a glare of profound scorn, mingled with some surprise. Their eyes no sooner met, than the man in the chaise assumed a most savage and uncarthly expression of countenance, which gave him all the appearance of an infuriated maniac. After grimacing in a manner sufficiently uncouth to attract the sole and undivided attention of the big man, he suddenly produced the pistol from his pocket, and, pretending to take a most accurate aim at the warrior's person, cocked it and placed his hand upon the trigger.

The big man's face grew instantly blanched; he put his hands to his head, made a step, or rather stagger back, and instantly disappeared, having either fallen or thrown himself upon the floor. The friend put his pistol in his pocket without the most remote approach to a smile or the slightest change of countenance, and Grimaldi sank down to the bottom of the chaise nearly suffocated with laughter.

At Gravesend they parted, the friend going on in the same chaise to Dover, and Grimaldi, after transacting the business which brought him from town, returning to play at the theatre straight: all recollection even of the "Dartford Blues" fading

CHAPTER VII.

1798 to 1801.

Partiality of George the Third for Theatrical Entertainments—Sheridan's kindness to Grimaldi—His domestic affliction and severe distress—The production of *Harlequin Amulet* a new era in Pantomime—Pigeon-fancying and Wagering—His first Provincial Excursion with Mrs. Baker, the eccentric Manageress—John Kemble and Jew Davis, with a new reading—Increased success at Maidstone and Canterbury—Polite interview with John Kemble.

THE summer passed pleasantly away, the whole of Grimaldi's spare time being devoted to the society of his wife and her parents, until the departure of the latter from London for Weymouth, of which theatre Mr. Hughes was the proprietor. It is worthy of remark, as a proof of the pleasure which George the Third derived from theatrical entertainments, that when the court were at Weymouth, he was in the habit of visiting the theatre at least four times a week; generally on such occasions commanding the performance, and taking with him a great number of the noblemen and ladies in his suite.

Drury Lane opened for the season on the 15th of September, and Sadler's Wells closed ten days afterwards: but while the latter circumstance released Grimaldi from his arduous labours at one theatre, the former one did not tend to increase them at the other, for pantomime was again eschewed at Drury Lane, and "*Blue Beard*," "*Feudal Times*," and "*Lodoiska*" reigned paramount. At the commencement of the season he met Mr.

“ Very pretty, sir.”

“ That’s right ! You must lead a domestic life, Joe : nothing like a domestic life for happiness, Joe : I lead a domestic life myself.” And then came one of those twinkling glances which no one who ever saw them can forget the humour of.

“ I mean to do so, sir.”

“ Right. But, Joe, what will your poor little wife do while you are at the theatre of an evening ? Very bad thing, Joe, to let a pretty young wife be alone of a night. I’ll manage it for you, Joe : I’ll put her name down upon the free list ; herself and friend.—But, mind, it’s a female friend, that’s all, Joe ; any other might be dangerous,—eh, Joe ?” And away he went without pausing for a moment to listen to Grimaldi’s expressions of gratitude for his thoughtful kindness. However, he did not omit performing his friendly offer, and his wife, availing herself of it, went to the theatre almost every night he played, sat in the front of the house until he had finished, and then they went home together.

In this pleasant and quiet manner the autumn and winter passed rapidly away. In the following year, 1799, it became apparent that his young wife would shortly make him a father ; and while this prospect increased the happiness and attention of her husband and parents, it added little to their slight stock of cares and troubles, for they were too happy and contented to entertain any other but cheerful anticipations of the result.

There is little to induce one to dwell upon a sad and melancholy chapter in the homely life of every-day. After many months of hope, and some of fear, and many lingering changes from better to worse, and back and back again, his dear wife,

last words she uttered. They were addressed to her brother. A few minutes afterwards, he sat beside a corpse.

They found in her pocket-book a few pencilled lines, beneath which she had written her wish that when she died they might be inscribed above her grave:—

Earth walks on Earth like glittering gold ;
Earth says to Earth, We are but mould :
Earth builds on Earth castles and towers ;
Earth says to Earth, All shall be ours.

They were placed upon the tablet erected to her memory. She died on the 18th of October, 1799, and was buried in the family vault of Mr. Hughes, at St. James's, Clerkenwell.*

In the first passion of his grief the widower went-distracted. Nothing but the constant attention and vigilance of his friends, who never left him alone, would have prevented his laying violent hands upon his life. There were none to console him, except with sympathy, for his friends were hers, and all mourned no common loss.

Mr. Richard Hughes, the brother, never forgot his sister's dying words, but proved himself under all circumstances and at all times Grimaldi's firm and steady friend. The poor fellow haunted the scenes of his old hopes and happiness for two months, and was then summoned to the theatre to set the audience in a roar ; and chalking over the seams which mental agony had worn in his face, was hailed with boisterous applause in the merry Christmas pantomime !

The title of this pantomime, which was produced at Drury Lane, was, " Harlequin Amulet ; or, the Magic of Mona ;" it was written by Mr. Powell, and produced under the superintendence

of Mr. James Byrne, the ballet-master. It was highly successful running without intermission from the night of its production until Easter, 1800. This harlequinade was distinguished by several unusual features besides its great success; foremost among them was an entire change both in the conception of the character of Harlequin and in the costume. Before that time it had been customary to attire the Harlequin in a loose jacket and trousers, and it had been considered indispensable that he should be perpetually attitudinizing in five positions, and doing nothing else but passing instantaneously from one to the other, and never pausing without being in one of the five. All these conventional notions were abolished by Byrne, who this year made his first appearance as Harlequin, and made Harlequin a very original person to the play-going public. His attitudes and jumps were all new, and his dress was infinitely improved: the latter consisted of a white silk shape, fitting without a wrinkle, and into which the variegated silk patches were woven, the whole being profusely covered with spangles, and presenting a very sparkling appearance. The innovation was not resisted: the applause was enthusiastic; "nor," says Grimaldi, "was it undeserved; for, in my judgment, Mr. James Byrne* was at that time the best Harlequin on the boards, and never has been excelled, even if equalled, since that period."

The alteration soon became general, and has proved a lasting one, Harlequin having been ever since attired as upon this memorable occasion, in accordance with the improved taste of his then representative.

Grimaldi's part in this production was a singularly arduous and wearying one: he had to perform Punch, and to change

the character throughout,—a suggestion which he was compelled resolutely to oppose. His reason for doing so will not be considered extraordinary, when we inform the present generation that his personal decorations consisted of a large and heavy hump on his chest, and a ditto, ditto, on his back ; a high sugar-loaf cap, a long-nosed mask, and heavy wooden shoes ;—the weight of the whole dress, and of the humps, nose, and shoes especially, being exceedingly great. Having to exercise all his strength in this costume, and to perform a vast quantity of what in professional language is termed “comic business,” he was compelled by fatigue, at the end of the sixth scene, to assume the Clown’s dress, and so relieve himself from the immense weight which he had previously endured. “The part of Columbine,” he tells us, “was supported by Miss Menage ;* and admirably she sustained it. I thought at the time that, taking them together, I never saw so good a Harlequin and Columbine ; and I still entertain the same opinion.”

“Harlequin Amulet” being played every night until Easter, he had plenty to do : but although his body was fatigued, his mind was relieved by constant employment, and he had little time, in the short intervals between exertion and repose, to brood over the heavy misfortune which had befallen him. Immediately after his wife’s death, he had removed from the scene of his loss to a house in Baynes’ Row, and he gradually became more cheerful and composed.

In this new habitation he devoted his leisure hours to the breeding of pigeons, and for this purpose had a room, which fanciers termed a *dormer*, constructed at the top of his house, where he used to sit for hours together, watching the birds as they disported in the air above him. At one time he had up-

wards of sixty pigeons, all of the very first order and beauty, and many of them highly valuable : in proof of which, he notes down with great pride a bet, concerning one pigeon of peculiar talents, made with Mr. Lambert, himself a pigeon-fancier.

This Mr. Lambert being, as Grimaldi says, "like myself, a pigeon-fancier, but, unlike myself, a confirmed boaster," took it into his head to declare and pronounce his birds superior in all respects to those in any other collection. This comprehensive declaration immediately brought all the neighbouring pigeon-breeders up in arms ; and Grimaldi, taking up the gauntlet on behalf of the inmates of the "dormer," accepted a bet offered by Lambert, that there was no pigeon in his flight capable of accomplishing twenty miles in twenty minutes. The sum at stake was twenty pounds. The money was posted, the bird exhibited, the day on which the match should come off named, and the road over which the bird was to fly agreed upon—the course being from the twentieth mile-stone on the Great North Road to Grimaldi's house. At six o'clock in the morning, the bird was consigned to the care of a friend, with instructions to throw it up precisely as the clock struck twelve, at the appointed mile-stone, near St. Albans ; and the friend and the pigeon, accompanied by a gentleman on behalf of the opposite party, started off, all parties concerned first setting their watches by Clerkenwell church. It was a very dismal day, the snow being very deep on the ground, and a heavy sleet falling, very much increasing the odds against the bird, the weather, of course, having great effect, and the snow frequently blinding it. There was no stipulation made, however, for fine weather ; so at twelve o'clock the two parties, accompanied by several friends, took up their station in the dormer. In exactly nineteen minutes after-

or rather minutes; for sometimes they remained away so long on their aërial excursions, that their owner gave them up in despair. On one occasion they were absent upwards of four hours. As their owner was sitting disconsolately, concluding they were gone for ever, his attention was attracted by the apparently unaccountable behaviour of three birds who had been left behind, and who, with their heads elevated in the air, were all gazing with intense earnestness at one portion of the horizon. After straining his eyes for a length of time without avail, their master began to fancy that he discerned a small black speck a great height above him. He was not mistaken, for by and by the black speck turned out, to his infinite joy, to be the lost flight of pigeons returning home, after a journey probably of several hundred miles.

When the pantomime had ceased to run, Grimaldi had but little to do at Drury Lane, his duties being limited to a combat or some such business, in "Lodoiska," "Feudal Times," and other spectacles, which he could well manage to reach the theatre in time for, after the performances at Sadler's Wells were over. Drury Lane closed in June, and re-opened in September, ten days after the season at Sadler's Wells had terminated; but as he did not expect to be called into active service until December, he played out of town, for the first time in his life, in the month of November, 1801.

There was at that time among the Sadler's Wells company a clever man named Lund, who, in the vacation time, usually joined Mrs. Baker's company on the Rochester circuit. His benefit was fixed to take place at Rochester, on the 15th, and coming to town, he waited on Grimaldi and entreated him to play for him on the occasion. Whenever it was in his power to

benefit, rehearsed half-a-dozen pantomime scenes, and having dined, went to the theatre, every portion of which was crammed before six o'clock. On his appearance, he was received with a tremendous shout of welcome; his two comic songs were each encored three times, and the whole performances went off with great éclat. Mrs. Baker, the manager or manageress, at once offered him an engagement for the two following nights, the receipts of the house to be divided between them. His acceptance of this proposal delighted the old lady so much, that the arrangement was no sooner concluded than she straightway walked upon the stage, dressed in the bonnet and shawl in which she had been taking the money and giving the checks, and in an audible voice gave out the entertainments herself, to the immense delight of the audience, who shouted vociferously.

This old lady appears to have been a very droll personage. She managed all her affairs herself, and her pecuniary matters were conducted on a principle quite her own. She never put her money out at interest, or employed it in any speculative or profitable manner, but kept it in six or eight large punch-bowls, which always stood upon the top shelf of a bureau, except when she was disposed to make herself particularly happy, and then she would take them down singly, and after treating herself with a sly look at their contents, put them up again.

This old lady had a factotum to whom attached the elegant sobriquet of "Bony Long;" the gentleman's name being Long, and his appearance bony. At a supper after the play, at which the guests were Lund, Grimaldi, Henry and William Dowton (sons of the celebrated actor of that name), the manageress, and "Bony," it was arranged that Grimaldi should perform Scara-

manufactured for him the best Scaramouch dress he ever wore. The assurances which were given the artist at the time that his abilities lay in the theatrical way were not without good foundation, for two years afterwards he left Rochester, came to London, and became principal master-tailor at Covent Garden Theatre. He held the situation for some years, and then removed to Drury Lane and filled the same office, which he still continues to hold.

On the second night, the house was filled in every part, and a great number of persons were turned away. On the following evening, on which he made his last appearance, and repeated the part of Scaramouch together with that of Clown; the orchestra was turned into boxes, seats were fitted up on every inch of available room behind the scenes, and the receipts exceeded in amount those of any former occasion.

At another supper that night with Mrs. Baker, he made an arrangement to join her company for a night or two, at Maidstone, in the following March, provided his London engagements would admit of his doing so. They were not at all behindhand with the money; for, at eight o'clock next morning, "Bony Long" repaired to his lodgings, taking with him an account of the two nights' receipts, Grimaldi's share whereof came to 160*l.*, which was at once paid over to him, down upon the nail, all in three-shilling pieces. This was an addition to his baggage which he had not expected, and he was rather at a loss how to convey his loose silver up to town, when he was relieved by a tavern-keeper, who being as glad to take the silver as Grimaldi was to get notes, very soon made the exchange, to the satisfaction of all parties. Having had this satisfactory settlement with the old lady, Grimaldi took his leave, and returned to town, not at all

the end of January following; drawing as much money as it had in the previous year. It was during this season, or about this time, that Grimaldi's old friend Davis, or "Jew Davis," as he was called, made his first appearance at Drury Lane. This is the man whose eccentricity gave rise to a ludicrous anecdote of John Kemble, of which the following is a correct version :

Kemble was once "starring" in the north of England, and paid a visit to the provincial theatre in which Jew Davis was engaged, where he was announced for Hamlet. Every member of the little company was necessarily called into requisition, and Jew Davis was "cast" to play the first grave-digger. All went well until the first scene of the fifth act, being the identical one in which Davis was called upon to appear: and here the equanimity and good temper of Kemble were considerably shaken: the grave-digger's representative having contracted a habit of grimacing which, however valuable in burlesque or farce, was far from being at all desirable in tragedy, and least of all in that philosophical tragedy of which Hamlet is the hero. But if the actor had contracted a habit of grimacing upon his part, the audience upon its part had contracted an equally constant habit of laughing at him: so the great tragedian, moralizing over the skull of Yorick, was frequently interrupted by the loud roars of laughter attendant upon the grave-digger's strangely comical and increasing grins.

This greatly excited the wrath of Kemble, and after the play was finished, he remonstrated somewhat angrily with Davis upon the subject, requesting that such "senseless buffoonery" might not be repeated in the event of their sustaining the same parts on any subsequent occasion. All this was far from answering the end proposed: the peculiarities of temper belonging to Jew

that his engagement was renewed for "a few nights more," and on the last of these "few nights" Hamlet was again the play performed.

As before, all went well till the grave-diggers' scene commenced; when Kemble, while waiting for his "cue" to go on, listened bodingly to the roars of laughter which greeted the colloquy of Davis and his companion. At length he entered, and at the same moment, Davis having manufactured a grotesque visage, was received with a shout of laughter, which greatly tended to excite the anger of "King John." His first words were spoken, but failed to make any impression: and upon turning towards Davis, he discovered that worthy standing in the grave, displaying a series of highly unsuitable although richly comic grimaces.

In an instant all Kemble's good temper vanished, and stamping furiously upon the stage, he expressed his anger and indignation in a muttered exclamation, closely resembling an oath. This ebullition of momentary excitement produced an odd and unexpected effect. No sooner did Davis hear the exclamation and the loud stamping of the angry actor, than he instantly raised his hands above his head in mock terror, and, clasping them together as if he were horrified by some dreadful spectacle, threw into his face an expression of intense terror, and uttered a frightful cry, half shout and half scream, which electrified his hearers. Having done this, he very coolly laid himself flat down in the grave, (of course disappearing from the view of the audience), nor could any entreaties prevail upon him to emerge from it, or to repeat one word more. The scene was done as well as it could be, without a grave-digger, and the audience, while it was proceeding, loudly expressed their apprehensions from



Drury Lane ; and, in that theatre, on the first day of the ensuing season, he was formally introduced by Sheridan to John Kemble, then stage-manager. By the latter he was not immediately recognised, although Kemble evidently remembered having seen him somewhere ; but, after a time, plainly devoted to consideration, he said—

“ Oh,—ah, ah ! I recollect now. You, sir, you are the gentleman who suddenly went into the grave, and forgot to come out again, I think ? ”

Davis admitted the fact without equivocation, and hastened to apologise for his ill-timed jesting. The affair was related to Sheridan, to whom, it is needless to say, it afforded the most unbounded delight, and all three joining in a hearty laugh, dismissed the subject.

When “ Harlequin Amulet ” was withdrawn, there was very little for Grimaldi to do during the rest of the season. On the 4th of March, therefore, in pursuance of his previous arrangement, he joined the old lady at Maidstone, and was announced for Scaramouch.

The announcement of his name excited an unwonted sensation in this quiet little town. As early as half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, the street in front of the theatre was rendered quite impassable by the vast crowd of persons that surrounded the doors. Mrs. Baker, who had never beheld such a scene in her life-time, became at first very much delighted, and then very much frightened. After some consideration, she despatched a messenger for an extra quantity of constables, and upon their arrival, threw the doors open at once, previously placing herself in the pay-box, according to custom, to take the money.

“ Now then, pit or box, pit or gallery, box or pit ? ” was her

“Then pay two shillings,—pass on, Tom-fool!” such was the old lady’s invariable address to everybody on busy nights, without the slightest reference to their quality or condition.

On this occasion of the doors being opened at five o’clock, when the house was quite full she locked up the box in which the money was deposited, and going round to the stage, ordered the performances to be commenced immediately, remarking, with a force of reasoning which it was impossible to controvert, that “the house could be but full, and being full to the ceiling now, they might just as well begin at once, and have it over so much the sooner.” The performance accordingly began without delay, to the great satisfaction of the audience, and terminated shortly after nine o’clock.

Grimaldi was very much caressed by the townspeople, and received several invitations to dinner next day from gentlemen residing in the neighbourhood; all of which he declined, however, being already engaged to the eccentric manageress, who would hardly allow him out of her sight. Happening to walk about the town in the course of the morning, he was recognised and saluted by the boys, in the same way as when he walked the streets of London. On the night of his second appearance, the house was again crowded, the door-keepers having managed, indeed, by some ingenious contrivance, to squeeze three pounds more into it than on the previous night. The first evening produced 154*l.*, and the second 157*l.* Of the gross sum, his share was 155*l.* 17*s.*, which was promptly paid to him after supper, on the second and last night.

The old lady had no sooner handed it over through the ever useful Bony, than she proposed to Grimaldi to go on with them to Canterbury, and to act there for the next two nights upon

from the press, than men on horseback were immediately despatched with them to Canterbury, about which city the whole impression was circulated and posted before nine o'clock. The old lady had theatres at Rochester, Maidstone, and Canterbury, besides many other towns in the circuit, and the size of the whole being very nearly the same, the scenery which was suitable to one fitted them all. Early in the morning, the whole company left Maidstone for Canterbury, whither Grimaldi followed in a post-chaise at his leisure. When he arrived there about one o'clock, everything was ready; no rehearsal was necessary, for there were the same performers, the same musicians, scene-shifters, and lamp-lighters. Having inspected the box-book, which notified that every takeable seat in the house was taken, he retired to Mrs. Baker's sitting-room, which was the very model of the one at Maidstone and at Rochester too, and found a good dinner awaiting his arrival. Here he was, and here they all were, in the city of Canterbury, about twenty miles from Maidstone, at one o'clock in the day, with the same scenery, dresses, decorations, and transformations as had been in use at the latter theatre late over-night, surrounded by the same actors, male and female, and playing in the same pieces which had been represented by the same men and women, and the same adjuncts, fourteen hours before at Maidstone.

He played here two nights, as had been agreed upon, to very nearly the same houses as at Maidstone; the first night's cash being 151*l.* 3*s.*, and the second 159*l.* 17*s.*, of which he received 155*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* Early the next morning he returned to London with 311*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* in his pocket, the profits he had acquired during an absence from the metropolis of only four

that Mr. Grimaldi would sustain his original character. This announcement being in direct violation of his articles of agreement at Drury Lane, and wholly inconsistent with the terms of his engagement at Sadler's Wells, he had no alternative but at once to wait upon Mr. John Kemble, the stage-manager of the former theatre, and explain to him the exact nature of his position.

He found John Kemble at the theatre, who received him with all the grandeur and authority of demeanour which it was his habit to assume when he was about to insist upon something which he knew would be resisted. Grimaldi bowed, and Kemble formally and gravely touched his hat.

"Joe," said Kemble, with great dignity, "what is the matter?"

In reply, Grimaldi briefly stated his case, pointing out that he was engaged by his articles at Drury to play in last pieces at and after Easter, but not in pantomime; that at Sadler's Wells he was bound to perform in the first piece; that these distinct engagements had never before been interfered with by the management of either theatre in the most remote manner upon any one occasion; and that, however much he regretted the inconvenience to which his refusal might give rise, he could not possibly perform the part for which he had been announced at Drury Lane.

Kemble listened to these representations with a grave and unmoved countenance; and when Grimaldi had finished, after waiting a moment, as if to make certain that he had really concluded, rose from his seat, and said in a solemn tone, "Joe, one word here, sir, is as good as a thousand—you *must* come!"

Joe felt excessively indignant at this, not merely because

is only one thing that can very well be said :—I will *not* come, sir."

"Will not, Joe,—eh?" said Kemble.

"I will not, sir," replied Grimaldi.

"Not!" said Kemble again, with great emphasis.

Grimaldi repeated the monosyllable with equal vehemence.

"Then, Joe," said Kemble, taking off his hat, and bowing in a ghost-like manner, "I wish you a very good morning!"

Grimaldi took off his hat, made another low bow, and wished Mr. Kemble good morning; and so they parted.

Next day his name was taken from the bills, and that of some other performer, quite unknown to the London stage, was inserted instead; which performer, when he did come out, went in again—for he failed so signally that the pantomime was not played after the Monday night.

In the short interval between this interview and the Easter holidays, Grimaldi was engaged in the study of a new part for Sadler's Wells, which was a very prominent character in a piece bearing the sonorous and attractive title of the "Great Devil."* He entertained very strong hopes that both the part and the piece would be very successful; and how far his expectations were borne out by subsequent occurrences, the next chapter will show.

* The Serio-Comic Spectacle of "The Great Devil; or, The Robber of Genoa," was produced late in the season of 1801, early in September, and on the 14th of that month was performed for C. Dibdin's benefit. Nicola, by Mr. Grimaldi; Bridget, by Mrs. Davis; Gattie, some years afterwards distinguished for his performance of Mons. Morbleu, at Drury Lane, had also a singing part in the piece.

CHAPTER VIII.

1802 to 1803.

Hard work to counterbalance great gains—His discharge *from* Drury Lane, and his discharge *at* Sadler's Wells—His return to the former house—Monk Lewis—Anecdote of him and Sheridan, and of Sheridan and the Prince of Wales—Grimaldi gains a Son and loses all his capital.

THE "Great Devil" came out on Easter Monday,* and its success entailed upon Grimaldi no inconsiderable degree of trouble and fatigue. He played two parts in it, and, to say nothing of such slight exertions as acting and fighting, had to change his dress no fewer than nineteen times in the progress of the piece. It made a great noise, and ran the whole season through.

As we had occasion to notice in the last chapter the case with which he acquired a large sum of money by his professional exertions, and as we may have to describe other large gains hereafter, it may not be amiss to show in this place how much of fatigue and harassing duty those exertions involved, and how much of bodily toil and fatigue he had to endure before those gains could be counted.

At Sadler's Wells he commenced the labour of the evening by

* Sadler's Wells Theatre, the interior of which had been wholly rebuilt since the close of the season, in 1801, opened on Easter Monday, April 19, 1802, with an occasional Burletta Prelude, entitled "Old Sadler's Ghost;" a new Comic Dance, called "The Jew Cobbler," in which M. Joubert, from Paris, as principal dancer, made his first appearance in England; the Serio-Comic Pantomime of "The Great Devil," with alterations and new dresses; and an entirely new Comic Pantomime, called "Harlequin Greenlander; or, The Whale Fishery." In "The Great Devil," Bologna, jun., after an absence of eight years, played the part of Satani, the Great Devil. Rudolpho, Mons. Gouriet; Nicola, Mr.

playing a long and arduous part in the before-mentioned "Great Devil;" after this he played in some little burletta which immediately succeeded it; upon conclusion of that he was clown to the rope-dancer; and, as a wind-up to the entertainments, he appeared as clown in the pantomime, always singing two comic songs in the course of the piece, both of which were regularly encored. He had then to change his dress with all possible speed, and take a hurried walk, and often a rapid run, to Drury Lane, to perform in the last piece.*

This immense fatigue, undergone six days out of every seven, left him at the conclusion of the week completely worn out and thoroughly exhausted, and, beyond all doubt, by taxing his bodily energies far beyond their natural powers, sowed the first seeds of that extreme debility and utter prostration of strength from which, in the latter years of his life, he suffered so much. The old man had a good right to say that, if his gains had been occasionally great, they were won by labour more than proportionate.

His attention to his duties and invariable punctuality were always remarkable. To his possession in an eminent degree of these qualities, may be attributed the fact, that during the whole of his dramatic career, long and arduous as it was, he never once disappointed the public, or failed in his attendance at the theatre to perform any part for which he was cast.

He continued to attend his duties as a member of the Drury Lane company for three months without finding that any violent

* This summary of Joe's exertions is over-stated: in the Spectacles Joe generally had a part, particularly where combatants were employed; but not in any of the little Burlettas alluded to, nor was he ever Clown to the rope: as Clown in the Pantomime, his name certainly appears in the Sadler's Wells' an-

consequences arose from his interview with John Kemble. The only perceptible difference was, that when they met, Kemble, instead of accosting him familiarly, as he had before been accustomed to do, would pull off his hat and make him a formal bow, which Grimaldi would return in precisely the same manner; so that their occasional meetings were characterised by something about half-way between politeness and absurdity. All this pleased Grimaldi very much, but rather surprised him too, for he had confidently expected that some rupture would have followed the announcement of his determination not to act. He was not very long, however, in finding that his original apprehensions were correct, for on the 26th of June he received the following epistle :—

“Drury Lane Theatre.

“SIR,

“I am requested by the proprietors to inform you that your services will be dispensed with for the next ensuing season.”

This notice was signed by Powell, the then prompter, and its contents considerably annoyed and irritated the person to whom it was addressed. To command him in the first place to perform what was out of his engagement and out of his power, and to punish him in the next by dispensing with his services, which of consequence involved his dispensing with his salary, seemed exceedingly harsh and unjust treatment. For a time he even contemplated bringing an action against Sheridan, against whom, under the terms of his agreement, he would in all probability have obtained a verdict; but he ultimately gave up all idea of seeking this mode of redress, and determined to consult his staunch and sincere friend Mr. Hughes, by whose advice he was always guided. To that gentleman's house he repaired, and

the Sadler's Wells season is over, and stop there until it recommences. You shall have four pounds a week all the time, and a clear benefit. It will be strange if this does not turn out better for you than your present engagement at Drury Lane."

He accepted the terms so kindly offered, without a moment's hesitation, and determining to be guided by the advice of Mr. Hughes, thought no more about the matter.

At Sadler's Wells the summer season went on very briskly until August, when a circumstance occurred which impeded the course of his success for some time, and might have been attended with much more dangerous consequences. He played the first lieutenant of a band of robbers in the before-mentioned "Great Devil,"* and in one scene had a pistol secreted in his boot, which, at a certain point of interest, he drew forth, presented at some of the characters on the stage, and fired off, thus producing what is technically termed an effect; in the production of which on the evening of the 14th of August, he very unintentionally presented another effect, the consequences of which confined him to his bed for upwards of a month. While he was in the act of drawing out the pistol, the trigger by some accident caught in the loop of the boot, into which (the muzzle being downwards) its contents were immediately discharged. The boot itself puffed out to a great size, presenting a very laughter-moving appearance to everybody but the individual in it, who was suffering the

* The "Great Devil" ceased to be played at Sadler's Wells the last week in May, 1802; the accident particularized as having occurred on the 14th of August, was, therefore, not during the performance of that piece, but on the last night of the pantomime of "St. George," in which it was announced would be presented several unexampled and unparalleled combats, exclusive of the combat with the Dragon, which involves St. George in a shower of fire: the consequences, however, did not "confine him to his bed for upwards of a

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most excruciating agony. Determined not to mar the effect of the scene, however, by leaving the stage before it was finished, he remained on until its conclusion; and then, when by the assistance of several persons the boot was got off it was found that the explosion had set fire to the stocking, which had been burning slowly all the time he had remained upon the stage; besides which, the wadding was still alight and resting upon the foot. He was taken home and placed under medical care; but the accident confined him to the house for more than a month.

At length, after a tedious, and, as it appeared to him *then*, almost an interminable confinement, he resumed his duties at Sadler's Wells Theatre, and the part also. But the effect was never more produced; for from that time forth the pistol was worn in his belt, in compliance with the established usages of robber-chieftains upon the stage, who, at minor theatres especially, would be quite incomplete and out of character without a very broad black belt, with a huge buckle, and at least two brace of pistols stuck into it.

During this illness he received great attention and kindness from Miss Bristow, one of the actresses at Drury Lane Theatre. She attended upon him every morning to assist in dressing the wound, and enlivened the hours which would otherwise have been very weary, by her company and conversation. In gratitude for her kindness, Grimaldi married her on the following Christmas Eve, and it may be as well to state in this place, that with her he lived very happily for more than thirty years; when she died.

Drury Lane opened on the 30th of September, with "As You

attention of the house engaged, while the last scene, which was a very heavy one, was being "set up." Now, if any fresh combatant had been ready in Grimaldi's place, very probably the piece might have gone off as well as it had theretofore, but Kemble, who was then stage-manager, as has been before stated, totally forgetting the reason of the combat's introduction, omitted to provide any substitute. The omission was pointed out at rehearsal, and then he gave directions that it should be altogether dispensed with.

The effect of this order was very unsatisfactory both to himself and the public.

There was a very full house at night, and the play went off as well as it could, and so did the afterpiece up to the time when the last scene should have been displayed ; but here the stage-manager discovered his mistake too late. The last scene was not ready, it being quite impossible to prepare it in time, and the consequence was, that the audience, instead of looking at the combat, were left to look at each other or at the empty stage, as they thought fit. Upon this, there gradually arose many hisses and other expressions of disapprobation, and at last some playgoer in the pit, who all at once remembered the combat, shouted out very loudly for it. The cry was instantly taken up and became universal : some demanded the combat, others required an apology for the omission of the combat, a few called upon Kemble to fight the combat himself, and a scene of great commotion ensued. The exhibition of the last scene, instead of allaying the tumult, only increased it, and when the curtain fell, it was in the midst of a storm of hisses and disapprobation.

It so happened that Sheridan had been sitting in his own

only that, but, as he knew nothing at all about the unlucky combat, very much confounded and amazed into the bargain. The moment the curtain was down, he rushed on to the stage, where the characters had formed a picture, and in a loud and alarming voice exclaimed—

“Let no one stir!”

Nobody did stir; and Sheridan walking to the middle of the proscenium, and standing with his back to the curtain, said in the most solemn manner,

“In this affair I am determined to be satisfied, and I call upon somebody here to answer me one question. What is the cause of this infernal clamour?”

This question was put in such an all-important way, that no one ventured to reply until some seconds had elapsed, when Barrymore, who played Blue Beard, stepped forward and said, that the fact was, there had formerly been a combat between Mr. Roffey and Joe, and the audience was dissatisfied at its not being done.

“And why was it not done, sir? Why was it not done? Where is Joe, sir?”

“Really, sir,” replied Barrymore, “it is impossible for me to say where he may be. Our old friend Joe was dismissed at the close of the last season by the stage-manager.”

At this speech Sheridan fell into a great rage, said a great many angry things, and made a great many profoundly important statements, to the effect that he would be master of his own house, and that nobody should manage for him, and so forth; all of which was said in a manner more or less polite. He concluded by directing the “call” porter of the theatre to go immediately to “Joe’s” house, and to request him to be upon

him in the situation he had previously held, adding unasked a pound a week to his former salary, "in order," as he expressed himself, "that matters 'might be arranged in a manner profoundly satisfactory."

On the day after, "Harlequin Amulet" flourished in the bills in large letters for the following Monday; a rehearsal was called, and during its progress Kemble took an opportunity of encountering Grimaldi, and said, with great good humour, that he was very glad to see him there again, and that he hoped it would be very long before they parted company. In this expression of feeling Grimaldi very heartily concurred; and so ended his discharge from Drury Lane Theatre, entailing upon him no more unpleasant consequences than the easily-borne infliction of an increased salary. So ended, also, the Exeter scheme, which was abandoned at once by Mr. Hughes, whose only object had been to serve his son-in-law.

"About this time," says Grimaldi, "I used frequently to see the late Mr. M. G. Lewis, commonly called Monk Lewis, on account of his being the author of a well-known novel, better known from its dramatic power than from its strait-laced propriety or morality of purpose. He was an effeminate looking man, almost constantly lounging about the green-room of Drury Lane, and entering into conversation with the ladies and gentlemen, but in a manner so peculiar, so namby-pamby (I cannot think at this moment of a more appropriate term), that it was far from pleasing a majority of those thus addressed. His writings prove him to have been a clever man; a consummation which his conversation would most certainly have failed signally in producing. I have often thought that Sheridan used to laugh in his sleeve at this gentleman; and I have indeed very good

houses, and almost invariably went off with loud applause. I have heard the following anecdote related, which, if true, clearly proves that Sheridan by no means thought so highly of this drama as did the public at large. One evening it chanced that these two companions were sitting at some tavern in the neighbourhood discussing the merits of a disputed question and a divided bottle, when Lewis, warming with his subject, offered to back his opinion with a bet.

"What will you wager?" inquired Sheridan, who began to doubt whether his was not the wrong side of the argument.

"I'll bet you one night's receipts of the *Castle Spectre*!" exclaimed the author.

"No," replied the manager; "that would be too heavy a wager for so trifling a matter. I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll bet you its intrinsic worth as a literary production!"

Lewis received these little sallies from his lively acquaintance with the most perfect equanimity of temper, never manifesting annoyance by action further than by passing his hand through his light-coloured hair, or by word further than a murmured interjection of "Hum!" or "Hah!"

There is another little anecdote in this place which we will also leave Grimaldi to tell in his own way.

"In the winter of the year I frequently had the honour of seeing his late Majesty George the Fourth, then Prince of Wales, who used to be much behind the scenes of Drury Lane, delighting everybody with his affability, his gentlemanly manners, and his witty remarks. On Twelfth Night, 1802, we all assembled in the green-room as usual on that anniversary at Drury Lane Theatre, to eat cake, given by the late Mr. Baddeley, who by his will left three guineas to be spent in the purchase of a

'It is not right that a crown should be the property of a *cake*: what say you, George?' The Prince merely laughed: and Sheridan, taking up the crown, offered it to him, adding—

"'Will you deign to accept this trifle?'

"'Not so,' replied his highness: 'however it may be doubted, it is nevertheless true that I prefer the cake to the crown, after all.' And so, declining the crown, he partook of our feast with hilarity and condescension."

There was no pantomime at Drury Lane, either in 1801 or 1802;* nor was any great novelty produced at Sadler's Wells in

* Grimaldi appears to have been much circumscribed in his performances at the Wells in 1801. Dubois was Clown in the *Harlequinades*, and between him and Joe, the comicalities of the season appear to have been divided; the comic songs being sung by Dubois, Grimaldi, and Davis. Among the extraordinary events of this season was the appearance in June of the late distinguished tragedian, Edmund Kean, as "*Master Carey, the Pupil of Nature*," who was announced to recite *Rolla's celebrated address from the Tragedy of "Pizarro."* There was something appropriate in his first appearance at the Wells: his great grandfather, Henry Carey, the illegitimate son of George Saville, Marquis of Halifax, and the avowed author and composer of the well-known ballad of "*Sally in our Alley*," wrote and composed many of the musical pieces for Sadler's Wells. Though often in great distress, and the author of many convivial songs, Harry Carey never employed his muse in opposition to the interests of morality. Poor Harry Carey, however, became at length the victim of poverty and despair, and hanged himself at his lodging in Warner-street, Clerkenwell, October 4, 1743. When found dead, he had but one halfpenny in his pocket. George Saville Carey was his posthumous child; at first a printer, he abandoned that calling for the stage, but his abilities did not ensure him success; and he became a lecturer and associate with Moses Kean in his imitations of popular actors, and Lectures on Mimicry. Carey had a daughter; and Moses Kean a brother, Edmund Kean, who made his first appearance on the stage at the Royalty Theatre, September 9, 1788. Edmund Kean was the father of the tragedian; and Nancy Carey gave him birth at her father's chambers in Gray's Inn. His mother called herself "*Mrs.*" Carey, and played first tragedy woman at Richardson's Booth at Bartholomew and other fairs: bills are extant announcing parts played by Mrs. Carey and Master Carey. Moses Kean, the uncle of the tragedian, was a tailor with a wooden leg: a convivial but in no respect a dissipated

the latter year. The year 1802, indeed, seems to have been productive of no melodramatic wonder whatever; the most important circumstance it brought to Grimaldi being the birth of a son on the 21st of November; an event which afforded him much joy and happiness.

But if 1802 brought nothing remarkable with it, its successor did, for it was ushered in with an occurrence of a rather serious nature, the consequences of which were not very soon recovered. Whether it was ill-fortune or want of caution, or want of knowledge of worldly matters, it did so happen that whenever Grimaldi succeeded in scraping together a little money, so surely did he lose it afterwards in some strange and unforeseen manner. He had at that period been for some time acquainted with a very respected merchant of the city of London, named Charles Newland (not Abraham), who was supposed to have an immense capital embarked in business, who lived in very good style, keeping up a great appearance, and who was considered to be, in short, a very rich man. He called at Grimaldi's house one morning in February, and requesting a few minutes' private conversation, said hastily,

"I dare say you will be surprised, Joe, when you hear what business I have come upon; but—but—although I am possessed of a great deal of wealth, it is all embarked in business, and I am at this moment very short of ready money; so I want you to lend me a few hundred pounds, if it is quite convenient." All this was said with a brisk and careless air, as if such slight

view of the setting sun, when rapt by the object before him and intent on the view, he lost his hold, fell into the street, and was killed. The accident is

trifles as "a few hundred pounds" were scarcely deserving of being named.

Grimaldi had never touched the five hundred and odd pounds which he had picked up on Tower-hill, but had added enough to make six hundred in all. This sum he hastened to place before his friend, assuring him, with great sincerity, that if he had possessed double or treble the amount, he would have been happy to have lent it him with the greatest readiness. The merchant expressed the gratification he derived from his friendship, and giving him a bill for the money at three months' date, shook his hand warmly, and left him.

The bill was dishonoured; the merchant became bankrupt, left England for America, and died upon the passage out. And thus the contents of the net purse and the bundle of notes were lost as easily as they were gained, with the addition of some small savings besides.

CHAPTER IX.

1803.

Containing a very extraordinary incident well worthy of the reader's attention.

ONE evening in the second week of November, 1803,* Grimaldi, then playing at Drury Lane, had been called by the prompter, and was passing from the green-room to the stage, when a

* Sadler's Wells opened on Easter Monday, April 11th, 1803, under a change of proprietors. Mr. Hughes retained his fourth; Thomas and Charles Dibdin had purchased Mr. Siddons' fourth for 1400*l*.; Barford and Yarnold had bought the fourth previously held by Mr. Thos. Arnold, of the First Fruits Office; Mr. Reeve purchased the eighth, hitherto the property of Mr. Wroughton; and Mr. Andrews the eighth previously held by Mr. Coates. The season is memorable for the appearance on that stage of the celebrated traveller, Signor Giambattista Belzoni, as the Patagonian Samson, in which character he performed prodigious feats of strength; one of which was to adjust an iron frame to his body, weighing 127 lbs., on which he carried eleven persons. On his benefit night he attempted to carry thirteen, but as that number could not hold on, it was abandoned. His stature, as registered in the books of the Alien Office, was six feet six inches.

Poor Tom Ellar, in his Manuscripts, notices—"The first time I met Signor Belzoni, was at the Royalty Theatre, on Easter Monday, 1808, my first appearance in London; the theatre closed after the fourth week. In September of the same year, I again met him at Saunders's booth in Bartholomew Fair, exhibiting as the French Hercules. In 1809, we were jointly engaged in the production of a Pantomime, at the Crow Street Theatre, Dublin; I as Harlequin, and he as an artist to superintend the last scene, a sort of Hydraulic Temple, which, owing to what is very frequently the case, the being over-anxious, failed and nearly inundated the orchestra. Fiddlers generally follow their leader, and Tom Cooke

messenger informed him that two gentlemen were waiting to see him at the stage-door. Afraid of keeping the stage waiting, he enjoined the messenger to tell the gentlemen that he was engaged at that moment, but that he would come down to them directly he left the stage. The play was "A Bold Stroke for a Wife : " Miss Mellon was Anne ; Bannister, Feignwell ; Aitkin, Simon Pure ; and Grimaldi, Aminadab.

As soon as he could get away from the stage, he hurried down stairs, and inquiring who wanted him, was introduced to two strangers, who were patiently awaiting his arrival. They were young men of gentlemanly appearance, and upon hearing the words, " Here's Mr. Grimaldi—who wants him ? " one of them turned hastily round, and warmly accosted him.

He looked about his own age, and had evidently been accustomed to a much warmer climate than that of England. He wore the fashionable evening-dress of the day—that is to say, a blue body-coat with gilt buttons, a white waistcoat, and tight pantaloons—and carried in his hand a small gold-headed cane.

" Joe, my lad ! " exclaimed this person, holding out his hand, in some agitation, " how goes it with you now, old fellow ? "

He was not a little surprised at this familiar address from a person whom he was not conscious of ever having seen in his life, and, after a moment's pause, replied that he really had not the pleasure of the stranger's acquaintance.

" Not the pleasure of my acquaintance ! " repeated the stranger, with a loud laugh. " Well, Joe, that seems funny, anyhow ! " He appealed to his companion, who concurred in the opinion, and they both laughed heartily. This was all very funny to the strangers, but not at all so to Grimaldi : he had a

He turned, and gazed at him again. He had opened his shirt, and was pointing to a scar upon his breast, the sight of which at once assured him that it was no other than his brother who stood before him,—his only brother, who had disappeared under the circumstances narrated in an earlier part of these memoirs.

They were naturally much affected by this meeting, especially the elder brother, who had been so suddenly summoned into the presence of the near relative whom long ago he had given up for lost. They embraced again and again, and gave vent to their feelings in tears.

"Come up stairs," said Grimaldi, as soon as the first surprise was over; "Mr. Wroughton is there—Mr. Wroughton, who was the means of your going to sea,—he'll be delighted to see you." The brothers were hurrying away, when the friend, whose presence they had quite forgotten in their emotion, said,

"Well, John, then I'll wish you good night!"

"Good night! good night!" said the other, shaking his hand; "I shall see you in the morning."

"Yes," replied the friend; "at ten, mind!"

"At ten precisely: I shall not forget," answered John.

The friend, to whom he had not introduced his brother in any way, departed; and they went upon the stage together, where Grimaldi introduced his brother to Powell, Bannister, Wroughton, and many others in the green-room, who, attracted by the singularity of his return under such circumstances, had collected round them.

Having his stage business to attend to, he had very little time for conversation; but of course he availed himself of every moment that he could spare off the stage, and in answer to his

“Why, John,” said his brother, “it’s very dangerous to carry so much money about with you!”

“Dangerous!” replied John, smiling; “we sailors know nothing about danger. But, my lad, even if all this were gone, I should not be penniless.” And he gave a knowing wink, which induced his brother to believe that he had indeed “made a good trip of it.”

At this moment Grimaldi was again called upon the stage; and Mr. Wroughton, taking that opportunity of talking to his brother, made many kind inquiries of him relative to his success and the state of his finances. In reply to these questions he made in effect the same statements as he had already communicated to Joseph, and exhibited as evidence of the truth of his declarations a coarse canvas bag, stuffed full of various coins, which he carefully replaced in his pocket again.

As soon as the comedy was ended, Grimaldi joined him; and Mr. Wroughton, having congratulated his brother on his return, and the fortunate issue of his adventures, bade them good night; when Grimaldi took occasion to ask how long the sailor had been in town.

He replied, two or three hours back; that he had merely tarried to get some dinner, and had come straight to the theatre. In answer to inquiries relative to what he intended doing, he said he had not bestowed a thought upon the matter, and that the only topic which had occupied his mind was his anxiety to see his mother and brother. A long and affectionate conversation ensued, in the course of which it was proposed by Joseph, that as his mother lived with himself and wife, and they had a larger house than they required, the brother should

play in the afterpiece, said, that he had done for the night, and that if he would wait while he changed his dress, he would go with him. His brother was, of course, glad to hear there was no necessity for them to separate, and Grimaldi hurried away to his dressing-room, leaving him on the stage.

The agitation of his feelings, the suddenness of his brother's return, the good fortune which had attended him in his absence, the gentility of his appearance, and his possession of so much money, all together confused him so, that he could scarcely use his hands. He stood still every now and then quite lost in wonder, and then suddenly recollecting that his brother was waiting, looked over the room again and again for articles of dress that were lying before him. At length, after having occupied a much longer time than usual in changing his dress, he was ready, and ran down to the stage. On his way he met Powell, who heartily congratulated him on the return of his relative, making about the thirtieth who had been kind enough to do so already. Grimaldi asked him, more from nervousness than for information, if he had seen him lately.

"Not a minute ago," was the reply; "he is waiting for you upon the stage. I won't detain you, for he complains that you have been longer away now, than you said you would be."

Grimaldi hurried down stairs to the spot where he had left his brother. He was not there.

"Who are you looking for, Joe?" inquired Bannister, as he saw him looking eagerly about.

"For my brother," he answered. "I left him here a little while back."

"Well, and I saw and spoke to him not a minute ago," said Bannister. "When he left me, he went in that direction

brother had passed. The man said he had, not a minute back ; he could not have got out of the street by that time.

He ran out at the door, and then up and down the street several times, but saw nothing of him. Where could he be gone to ? Possibly, finding him longer gone than he had anticipated, he might have stepped out to call upon one of his old friends close by, whom he had not seen for so many years, with the intention of returning to the theatre. This was not unlikely ; for in the immediate neighbourhood there lived a Mr. Bowley, who had been his bosom friend when they were boys. The idea no sooner struck Grimaldi than he ran to the house and knocked hastily at the door. The man himself answered the knock, and was evidently greatly surprised.

"I have indeed seen your brother," he said, in reply to Grimaldi's question. "Good God ! I was never so amazed in all my life."

"Is he here now ?" was the anxious inquiry.

"No ; but he has not been gone a minute ; he cannot have gone many yards."

"Which way ?"

"That way,—towards Duke-street."

"He must have gone," thought Grimaldi, "to call on Mr. Bailey, our old landlord." He hurried away to the house in Great Wild-street, and knocked long and loudly at the door. The people were asleep. He knocked again and rang violently, being in a state of great excitement ; at length a servant-girl thrust her head out of an upper window, and said, both sulkily and sleepily,—

"I tell you again, he is not at home."

there after he had left them. She insisted that Grimaldi, who was tired, should go to bed, while she sat up and waited for her son. He did so, and the mother remained all through the long night anxiously expecting his arrival.

This may appear a long story, but its conclusion invests it with a degree of interest which warrants the detail. The running away to sea of a young man, and his return after a lapse of years, is, and ever has been, no novelty in this island. This is not the burden of the tale. It possessed an awful interest to those whom it immediately concerned, and cannot fail to have some for the most indifferent reader.

From that night in November, 1803, to this month of January, 1838, the missing man was never seen again ; nor was any intelligence, or any clue of the faintest or most remote description, ever obtained by his friends respecting him.

Next morning, and many mornings afterwards, the mother still anxiously and hopelessly expected the arrival of her son. Again and again did she question Grimaldi about him—his appearance, his manner, what he said, and all the details of his disappearance ; again and again was every minute fact recalled, and every possible conjecture hazarded relative to his fate. He could scarcely persuade himself but that the events of the preceding night were a delusion of his brain, until the inquiries after his brother, which were made by those who had seen him on the previous night, placed them beyond all doubt. He communicated to his friends the strange history of the last few hours, with all the circumstances of his brother's sudden appearance, and of his equally sudden disappearance. He was advised to wait a little while before he made the circumstance public in the hope that he might have been induced to reveal

prompted them to advise. A powerful nobleman who at that time used to frequent Drury Lane Theatre, and who had on many occasions expressed his favourable opinion of Grimaldi, interested himself greatly in the matter, and set on foot a series of inquiries at the Admiralty: every source of information possessed by that establishment that was deemed at all likely to throw any light upon the subject was resorted to, but in vain; the newspapers were searched to ascertain what ships had arrived in the river or upon the coast that day—whence they came, what crews they carried, what passengers they had; the police-officers were paid to search all London through, and endeavour to gain some information, if it were only of the lost man's death. Everything was tried by the family, and by many very powerful friends whom the distressing nature of the inquiry raised up about them, to trace the object of their regret and labour, but all in vain. The sailor was seen no more.

Various surmises were afloat at the time regarding the real nature of this mysterious transaction; many of them, of course, were absurd enough, but the two most probable conjectures appear to have been hazarded many years afterwards, and when all chance of the man being alive were apparently at an end,—the one by the noble lord who had pursued the investigation at the Admiralty, and the other by a shrewd long-headed police-officer, who had been employed to set various inquiries on foot in the neighbourhood of the theatre.

The former suggested that a press-gang, to whom the person of the brother was known, might possibly have pounced upon him in some by-street, and have carried him off; in which case, as he had previously assumed a false name, the fact of his friends

as it was liable to many very obvious doubts and objections. Upon the whole, they felt inclined to give far more credence to the still more tragical, but, it is to be feared, more probable explanation which the experience of the police-officer suggested.

This man was of opinion that the unfortunate subject of their doubts had been lured into some low infamous den, by persons who had either previously known or suspected that he had a large sum of money in his possession; that here he was plundered, and afterwards either murdered in cold blood, or slain in some desperate struggle to recover his gold. This conjecture was encouraged by but too many corroboratory circumstances: the sailor was of a temper easily persuaded: he had all the recklessness and hardihood of a seafaring man, only increased by the possession of prize-money and the release from hard work: he had money, and a very large sum of money, about him, the greater part in specie, and not in notes, or any security which it would be difficult or dangerous to exchange: all this was known to his brother and to Mr. Wroughton, both eye-witnesses of the fact.

One other circumstance deserves a word. It was, both at the time and for a long period afterwards, a source of bitter, although of most groundless self-reproach to Grimaldi, that he could not sufficiently recollect the appearance of the man who accompanied his brother to the stage-door of the theatre, to describe his person. If he could have been traced out, some intelligence respecting the poor fellow might perhaps have been discovered; but Grimaldi was so much moved by the unexpected recognition of his brother, that he scarcely bestowed a thought or a look upon his companion: nor, after taxing his memory for many

others who had passed in and out of the theatre during the time the two young men were standing in the lobby.

Recollecting the intimate terms upon which the two appeared to be, and the appointment which was made between them for the following morning, "at ten precisely," there is little reason to doubt that if the sailor had disappeared without the knowledge or privity of his companion, the latter would infallibly have applied to Grimaldi to know where his brother was. Coupling the fact of his never doing so, and never being seen or heard of again, with the circumstance of the lost man never having evinced the least inclination to take him home with him, to retain him when he was in his brother's company, or even to introduce him in the slightest manner, (from all of which it would seem that he was some bad or doubtful character,) the family arrived at the conclusion,—if it should ever be an unjust one, it will be forgiven,—that this man was cognizant of, if indeed he was not chiefly instrumental in bringing about, the untimely fate of the murdered man, for such they always supposed him. Whether they were right or wrong in this conclusion will probably ever remain unknown.

CHAPTER X.

1803 to 1805.

Bologna and his Family—An Excursion into Kent with that personage—Mr. Mackintosh, the gentleman of landed property, and his preserves—A great day's sporting; and a scene at the Garrick's Head in Bow-street between a Landlord, a Gamekeeper, Bologna, and Grimaldi.

SIGNOR BOLOGNA, better known to his intimates by the less euphonious title of Jack Bologna, was a countryman of Grimaldi's father, having been, like him, born at Genoa; he had been well acquainted with him, indeed, previously to his coming to England. He arrived in this country, with his wife, two sons, and a daughter, in 1787.* The signor was a posture-master, and his wife a slack-wire dancer; John his eldest son (afterwards the well-known harlequin), Louis his second son, and Barbara the youngest child, were all dancers. They were first engaged at Sadler's Wells, and here an intimacy commenced between Bologna and Grimaldi, which lasted during the re-

* Pietro Bologna made his first appearance at Sadler's Wells on Easter Monday, April, 1786, when the bill announced—"New Comic and Entertaining Performances on the Slack Wire, by Signor Pietro Bologna; being his first appearance in this kingdom. Rope-dancing by the Little Devil, Mr. Casamire, and Madame La Romaine, being also her first appearance in this kingdom. Clown to the Rope, by Signor Pietro Bologna." Miss Romanzini, afterwards the distinguished ballad vocalist, Mrs. Bland, appeared also on the same evening.

mainder of their lives ; they were children when it commenced, playing about the street in the morning, and at the theatre at night.

The signor and his family remained at Sadler's Wells until 1793, when Mr. Harris engaged him and his children (his wife had died before this time) at Covent Garden, where they remained for several years ; Bologna playing during the summer months at the Surrey Circus, as Grimaldi used to act at Sadler's Wells. In 1801 he left Covent Garden, and in 1803 the Circus ; upon the conclusion of the latter engagement, he was immediately secured for the ensuing season at Sadler's Wells, where he reappeared on Easter Monday in 1804. During the many years which had passed away since he closed his first engagement at Sadler's Wells, he and Grimaldi had been necessarily prevented by their different occupations from seeing much of each other ; but being now once more engaged at the same theatre, their old intimacy was renewed. Their wives becoming attached to each other, and their engagements being pretty much the same, they were constantly at each other's houses, or in each other's society. They met with a droll adventure in company, which may as well be related in this place.

Drury Lane closed in June and reopened on the 4th of October ; but, as usual, Grimaldi's services were not required until

Signor Bologna and his Children ;" these were his sons, John and Louis. Bologna and his family left the Wells at the close of the season, 1794 ; and at Easter, 1795, the whole were employed at Jones's Royal Circus. In the Pantomime of " The Magic Feast," in September, Signor Bologna played Pantaloon ; his son, John, afterwards distinguished in the bills as Mr. Bologna, jun., played Harlequin ; and the Signor's wife, Mrs. Bologna, a fishwoman.

"No more I am," said Mackintosh, with a wink; "the business belongs to mother!"

Bologna looked inexpressibly annoyed, and Grimaldi laughed outright, at which Mr. Mackintosh seemed rather pleased than otherwise, taking it to all appearance quite complimentary. "Yes," he said, "I may be said to be a gentleman at large, for I do nothing but ride about in my carriage here," pointing to the tax-cart, "or stroll-out with my gun or my fishing-rod. Mother's quite a woman of business; but as I am an only child, I suppose I shall have to look after it myself some day or other."

He remained silent a moment, and then said, touching Bologna smartly with his whip, "I suppose, old fellow, you didn't think you were coming to a public-house—eh?"

"Indeed I did not," was the sulky reply.

"Ah! I thought you'd be surprised," said Mackintosh, with a hearty laugh. "I never let my London friends know who or what I am, except they're very particular friends, like you and Joe, for instance. I just lead them to guess I'm a great man, and there I leave 'em. What does it matter what other idea strangers have about one?—But here we are, so get out of your gig; and rest assured you shall have as hearty a welcome as you'll ever get at a nobleman's house."

There was something hearty and pleasant in the man's manner, despite his coarseness; so, finding that Bologna was not inclined to speak, Grimaldi said something civil himself; which was extremely well received by their host, who shook his hand warmly, and led them into the house, where, being introduced to Mrs. Mackintosh by her son, as particular friends



was all very pleasant, and returning to supper, were treated with great hospitality. On retiring to rest, Bologna acknowledged that "matters might have been worse," but before pronouncing a final opinion, prudently waited to ascertain how the preserves would turn out. On the following day they divided their time pretty equally between eating, drinking, chatting with the chance customers of the house, their host and his mother, and, though last, not least, preparing their guns for the havoc which they purposed making the next morning in the preserves of Mr. Mackintosh, of which preserves he still continued to speak in terms of the highest praise.

Accordingly, they met at the breakfast-table a full hour earlier than on the previous day, and having despatched a hearty meal, sallied forth, accompanied by Mr. Mackintosh, who declined carrying a gun, and contented himself with showing the way. Having walked some little distance, they came to a stile, which they climbed over, and after traversing a plot of pasture-land arrived at a gate, beyond which was a field of fine buckwheat. Here the guide called a halt.

"Wait a minute!—wait a minute!" cried he; "you are not so much accustomed to sporting as I."

They stopped. He advanced to the gate, looked over, and hastily returned.

"Now's the time!" he said eagerly; "there's lots of birds in that field!" They crept very cautiously onwards: but when they reached the gate and saw beyond it, were amazed to discern nothing but an immense quantity of pigeons feeding in the field.

"*There's a covey!*" said Mackintosh, admiringly.

"I expected to find pheasants and partridges," answered both sportsmen together. Bologna, upon whom the sulks were again beginning to fall, gave a grunt of disapprobation; but Mackintosh either was, or pretended to be, greatly surprised.

"Pheasants and partridges!" he exclaimed, with a ludicrous expression of amazement. "Oh dear, quite out of the question! I invited you down here to shoot birds—and pigeons are birds; and there are the pigeons—shoot away, if you like. I have performed my part of the agreement. Pheasants and partridges!" he repeated: "most extraordinary!"

"The fellow's a humbug!" whispered Bologna; "kill as many of his pigeons as you can."

With this understanding, Bologna fired at random into the nearest cluster of pigeons, and Grimaldi fired upon them as they rose frightened from the ground. The slaughter was very great: they picked up twenty in that field, five in the one beyond, and saw besides several fall which they could not find. This great success, and the agreeable employment of picking up the birds, restored their equanimity of temper, and all went well for some time, until Mackintosh said inquiringly,

"I think you have them all now?"

"I suppose we have," replied Bologna; "at least, all except those which we saw fall among the trees yonder."

"Those you will not be able to get," said Mackintosh.

"Very good; such being the case, we have 'em all," returned Bologna.

"Very well," said Mackintosh, quietly; "and now, if you will take my advice, you will cut away at once."

"Cut away!" said Bologna.

"Cut away!" exclaimed Grimaldi.

“But what has our killing these pigeons to do with cutting away?”

“Bless us!” cried Mackintosh, “you are not very bright to-day! Don’t you see that when the squire comes to hear of it, he’ll be very angry. Now, what can be plainer, if he is very angry, as I know he will be, then if you are here, he’ll put you in prison? Don’t you ’stand that. No, no: what I say is, cut away at once, and don’t stop for him to catch you.”

“Pooh!” said Bologna, with a contemptuous air, “I see you know nothing of the law. There’s not a squire in all England who has power to put us in prison, merely because we have killed your pigeons, although we may not have taken out certificates.”

“*My* pigeons!” exclaimed Mackintosh. “Lord help you! they’re none o’ mine!—they belong to the squire, and very fond of them he is, and precious savage he’ll be when he finds out how you have been peppering them. So there I come back again to what I set out with. If you two lads will take my advice, now you’ve got your pigeons, you’ll cut away with them.”

The remarkable disclosure contained in this little speech fairly overwhelmed them; they stared at each other in stupid surprise, which shortly gave way first to anger and then to fear. They were greatly awed at contemplating the risk which they had incurred of being “sent to prison;” and after a few words of angry remonstrance addressed to Mr. Mackintosh, which that gentleman heard with a degree of composure and philosophy quite curious to behold, they concluded that they had better act upon his advice, and “cut away” at once.

They lost no time in returning to the inn; and here, while

much delighted, and vented so many knowing winks, that for very life they could not help laughing outright.

On the following morning, Bologna and Grimaldi encountered each other by chance in Covent Garden. Grimaldi had been to Drury Lane to see if he were wanted, and Bologna had been into the Strand, in which, during the winter months, when he was not engaged at any theatre, he had an exhibition. They laughed heartily at meeting, as the recollection of the day previous, and its adventures came upon them, and finally adjourned to the Garrick's Head, in Bow-street, to have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, and once more talk the matter over. The house was then kept by a man of the name of Spencer, who had formerly been harlequin at Drury Lane, but who, having left the profession, had turned Boniface instead. He was standing at the door when they arrived, and all three being upon intimate terms, was invited to join in a glass of wine; to this he readily assented, and they adjourned to his private room, where the Kentish adventures were related, to his great amusement and pleasure.

"By the by, though," he said, when the merriment was pretty well over, "I wish you had happened to mention to me that you wanted a few days' shooting, for I could have procured that for you with the greatest ease. I was born at Hayes, and all my relatives live in Kent; besides, I know pretty well every gamekeeper in the county;—in fact, when in town they invariably come to this house, and would have been delighted to have obliged any friend of mine."

"Ah!" said Bologna, "and in that case we should have had birds to shoot at, and not pigeons."

Here Mr. Spencer indulged in a laugh, and said, "I am sorry to hear that."

him be seated, said, "But, Joseph, what has brought you so suddenly to town?"

"Oh, drat it!" exclaimed the new-comer, "very disagreeable business indeed. There were two vagabonds down in our parts yesterday from London, and they killed and stole fifty or sixty of master's pigeons. I've come up here to find them out and apprehend them: I've got a constable drinking in the tap."

This information rather flustered them, and Bologna turned as pale as death; but the host, after indulging in two winks, and one fit of reflection, quietly said,

"Well, but Joseph, how can you find them out, think you? London's a large place, Joseph."

"Why, I'll tell you," replied the gamekeeper, for such, as they afterwards discovered, he was. "I found out, that the rascals had been staying at Mrs. Mackintosh's house, and were friends of her son; so I went to him last night and asked him where the fellows were. 'Oh,' says he, 'I know what you've come about: they've cut away with them pigeons!' 'Yes,' says I; 'and unless you tell me where they've cut away to, I shall make you answerable.' 'Oh,' says he again, 'I know nothing about 'em; they're no friends of mine,' he says, 'they're only play-actors: one's a Clown and t'other's a Harlequin at one of the London theatres.' And this was all I could get from him; so up I came this morning, and knowing that you were acquainted with theatrical people, I thought I'd come and ask you which of the Clowns and which of the Harlequins it was most likely to be."

"Is the squire very angry?" asked Spencer.

"Oh, very," responded Joseph, with a shake of the head: "he's determined to pursue them to the very extremity of the

he felt certain his will would prompt him to conceal. As to Bologna, his agitation alone was sufficient to announce the real state of the fact; for, in addition to a ghastly paleness which overspread his face, he trembled so much, that in an attempt to convey some wine to his lips, he deposited it upon his knees and left it there, staring all the while at the gamekeeper with a most crest-fallen visage.

"There's one thing the squire appears to have forgotten," said Spencer, "and that is simply this—that before he can pursue these fellows to the extremity of the law, he has got to find them."

"True," answered Joseph; "and unless you assist me, I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to do that. I suppose, now, there are a good many Clowns and Harlequins in London,—eh?"

"A great many," replied Spencer. "I am one, for instance."

"Oh!" smiled the gamekeeper, "but it isn't you."

"That's true," said the host, composedly. "But I'll tell you what; it is two particular friends of mine, though, who did it!"

Joseph exclaimed, "Indeed!" and Bologna gave Grimaldi a look which clearly evidenced his conviction, firstly, that it was all up, and secondly, that it was impossible to "cut away."

"Friends of yours—hey?" said Joseph, ruminating. "Then I expect you wont assist me in finding them out?"

"Not a bit of it," answered Spencer, "so you may go and look among the Harlequins and Clowns yourself, and Heaven help you! for the jokes they will play and the tricks they will serve you will be enough to wear your heart out."

Joseph looked greatly mortified at this compassionate speech.

sum for the pigeons, and stand a rumpsteak dinner and a bottle of wine this very day. What say you?"

Joseph's countenance brightened up. "Oh!" said he, "as to the pigeons, of course, I could manage. If the gentlemen are friends of yours, consider the matter settled,—I'll talk the squire over about the matter. And as to the steak and wine, why I don't mind partaking of them; and, in return, they shall come down into Kent some day next week, and *I'll* give them a morning's shooting."

"Then," said Spencer, rising formally, "these are the gentlemen. Gentlemen, this is Mr. Joseph Clarke."

All was satisfactorily settled: the rump-steak and wine were ordered, duly eaten and drunk, and they spent the afternoon together very jovially, accepting Mr. Clarke's invitation for another "day's shooting" with great alacrity;—nor did they omit keeping the appointment; but, on the day fixed, went once more into Kent, when, under the able guidance of their new acquaintance, they succeeded in killing and bagging four hares and five brace of pheasants in less than two hours.

They returned to town without seeing anything more of their friend Mr. Mackintosh, but being upon the very best terms with Mr. Joseph Clarke, who—but for his really keeping his word and giving them a day's sport—might be not unreasonably suspected of having been in league with the landlord to use the sportsmen for their joint amusement, and to extract a good dinner from them besides.

At Drury Lane no novelty was brought out until the holidays. John Kemble had left the theatre on the termination of the previous season, and had become a proprietor of the other house,

In January, 1805, they brought out at Drury a most miserable specimen of a pantomime called "Harlequin's Fireside," which, contrary to the expectations of the company, ran till the following Easter, and was received, to their great amazement, with considerable applause. Mr. T. Dibdin, to whom Grimaldi expressed his surprise at its reception, admitted the poverty of the piece, and observed that the abilities of the actors had alone occasioned its success. Grimaldi says it was very kind of him to say so, and thinks that perhaps it might be. It is by no means improbable, for similar results are not unfrequent now-a-days.

Sadler's Wells reopened, as usual, at Easter, 1805: Grimaldi and Bologna were again engaged, and the season was a very profitable one. When "Harlequin's Fireside" had ceased running, he did not play at Drury above half a dozen times during the rest of the season. The theatre closed in June, and reopened again on the 21st of September, the performances being "Othello" and "Lodoiska," in which latter piece Grimaldi, his wife, and mother, all appeared.

On the conclusion of the night's amusements, he had an interview with the acting manager, which, although at first both pleasing and profitable, led in less than six weeks to his departure from the theatre at which he had originally appeared, and in which he had constantly played, with all possible success, for nearly four-and-twenty years.

CHAPTER XI.

1805 to 1806.

Stage Affairs and Stage Quarrels—Mr. Graham, the Bow Street Magistrate and Drury Lane Manager—Mr. Peake—Grimaldi is introduced to Mr. Harris by John Kemble—Leaves Drury Lane and engages at Covent Garden—Mortification of the authorities at “the other house”—He joins Charles Dibdin’s Company and visits Dublin—The *vet* Theatre—Ill success of the speculation, and great success of his own Benefit—Observations on the comparative strength of Whisky Punch and Rum Punch, with interesting experiments.

THE manager of Drury Lane had advertised Tobin’s comedy of “The Honey Moon” as the play for the second night of the season;* not recollecting, until it was too late to alter the bills, that in consequence of the secession of Mr. Byrne, who had been ballet-master, and the non-engagement of any other person in his place, there was no one to arrange the dance incidental to the piece. In this dilemma, Grimaldi, who had been accustomed to arrange the dances at Sadler’s Wells, was sent for, and, as soon as “Lodoiska” was over, the interview took place between him and the manager to which reference was made at the close of the last chapter.

Mr. Wroughton, after stating that he was in a very unexpected dilemma, and that unless Grimaldi would assist him he would have to change the piece for the ensuing night,—which it was

exceedingly desirable to avoid doing, if possible,—briefly narrated the circumstances in which the theatre was placed, and concluded by offering him two pounds per week in addition to his regular salary, if he would arrange the dance in question, and assist in getting up any other little dances and processions that might be required. This offer he readily accepted, merely stipulating that the increased salary should be understood to extend over the whole season, and not merely until another ballet-master was engaged. Mr. Wroughton observed, that nothing could be fairer, that this was what he meant, and that Grimaldi had his instructions to engage as many male dancers as he might deem necessary. He at once entered upon his new office, immediately engaged as many hands (or legs) as he required, arranged the dance during the night, called a rehearsal of it at ten in the morning, got it into a perfect state by twelve, rehearsed it again in its proper place in the comedy, and at night had the satisfaction of hearing it encored with great applause.

At the end of the week, he received his increased salary from Mr. Peake, the treasurer, a gentleman well known and highly respected by all connected with the stage or theatrical literature, who shook him by the hand, congratulated him on this new improvement of his income, and cordially wished him success.

Before he accepted the money, he said, “My dear sir, to prevent any future difference, it is thoroughly understood, is it, that this increase is for the season?”

“Undoubtedly,” replied Mr. Peake: “I will show you, if you like, Mr. Graham’s written order to me to that effect.” This he did, and Grimaldi of course was perfectly satisfied. Mr. Graham, who was then a magistrate at Bow-street, was at the head of affairs at Drury Lane.

and himself, for he continued to arrange the minor dances and processions, and his arrangements were repeatedly very warmly commended by Mr. D'Egville.

A new grand ballet, called "Terpsichore," was produced by the latter gentleman immediately after his joining the company, in which Grimaldi performed Pan, which he always considered a capital character, and one of the best he ever had to play. The ballet was got up to bring forward Madame Parisot,* who was engaged for the season, for one thousand guineas. It was thoroughly rehearsed, at least fourteen times before the night of performance; was very favourably received, and had a good run.

He was not a little surprised, on Saturday the 26th of October, when he went as usual to the treasury to draw his salary, to hear that thenceforth the extra two pounds would not be paid. Mr. Peake admitted that he was also very much surprised and annoyed at the circumstance, again producing Mr. Graham's letter, and candidly acknowledging, that in his opinion this uncalled-for attempt to rescind the contract, which was none of

* The management of Drury Lane, in their desire of novelty, had engaged M. Joubert, and Mademoiselle Parisot, from the King's Theatre for the season. On October 24, it was underlined in the bill of the day, that she would appear for the first time, on that stage, on Monday, the 28th, in a new ballet, composed by M. D'Egville, entitled "Terpsichore's Return;" it was, however, "owing to the indisposition of a principal performer," deferred a few days—till November 1. In this ballet, Grimaldi had a great part, that of Pan, in which he fell in love with Terpsichore, who, after favouring his pretensions, jilted him; this allowed Joe full latitude of display, and the applause the ballet obtained had never been exceeded on the production of any drama or piece in that, or any other theatre. The ballet was performed the fifth time, on Saturday, November 9, on which night Grimaldi quitted the theatre, and never afterwards was within its walls. "Terpsichore's Return" was performed a sixth time, on Monday, November 25, and Pan was personated by George D'Egville, a pantomimist,

Grimaldi's seeking, was very paltry. He immediately waited upon Mr. Wroughton and mentioned the circumstance, at which he too appeared greatly vexed, although it was not in his power to order the additional sum to be paid. He then mentioned the circumstance to his wife, dwelling upon it with great irritation; but she, observing that it was of no consequence, for they could do very well without it, proposed that, having nothing to do at Drury Lane that night, they should go for an hour or two to Covent Garden.

To this proposition he made no objection; so, as he passed down Bow-street, he called in upon Mr. T. Dibdin for an order, and the conversation happening naturally enough to turn upon theatrical affairs, mentioned what had just occurred at Drury Lane. Mr. Dibdin immediately expressed himself in very strong terms upon the subject, and counselled Grimaldi to withdraw from the theatre, and to accept an engagement at the other house. The advice generated a long conversation between them, which terminated in Grimaldi saying, Mr. Dibdin might, if he pleased, mention the subject to Mr. Harris, and say, if the Management were willing to engage him, he was willing to enter into articles for the following season.

In the course of the evening, he received a note begging his attendance at Covent Garden on Monday, at twelve, and keeping the appointment, was ushered into a room in which were Mr. Harris and John Kemble. The latter greeted him in a very friendly manner, and said,

“Well, Joe, I see you are determined to follow me.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Grimaldi, who had been thinking of something polite; “you are a living magnet of attraction, Mr. Kemble.”

Grimaldi," whose father he had known well, who was a true chip of the old block, and the first low comedian in the country.

Mr. Harris said a great many fine things in reply to these commendations, and, rising, requested Grimaldi to follow him into an adjoining apartment. He did so, and in less than a quarter of an hour had signed articles for five seasons; the terms being, for the first season, six pounds per week; for the second and third, seven pounds; and for the fourth and fifth, eight pounds. Independent of these emoluments, he had several privileges reserved to him, among which was the very important one of permission to play at Sadler's Wells, as he had theretofore done. These arrangements being concluded, he took his leave, greatly satisfied with the improved position in which he stood, as up to that time he had only received four pounds per week at Drury Lane.*

In the evening, he had to play Pan in the ballet at Drury. When he had dressed for the part, he entered the green-room,

* The transfer of Joe's services from Drury Lane to the rival Théâtre Covent Garden, is differently accounted for by Tom Dibdin, who was a party in the affair, and whose recollection of past facts was generally too correct to be called in question. Grimaldi's engagement at Covent Garden is stated to have been effected prior to his going to Peter-street, Dublin, in the pay of the two Dibdins; the contrary was the fact. After Grimaldi's return from Dublin, he sought employment at Covent Garden, nor is there reason to doubt Dibdin's statement in any way. He says: "I had often pressed Mr. Harris to engage Grimaldi for my pantomimes, but his answer was, he would not be the first to infringe an agreement made between Drury Lane and Covent Garden, not to engage each other's performers until a twelvemonth had elapsed since such performers had left their situations. Grimaldi, by going in our venture to Dublin, had now dissolved this obstacle; and I one day met him at the stage-door of Covent Garden, waiting, as he told me, to see Mr. Shotter, a confidential servant of Mr. Harris, who would take up his name to the proprietor: he also told me

which was pretty full of ladies and gentlemen, among whom was Mr. Graham, who, the moment he saw him, inquired if a report that had reached him of Mr. Grimaldi's going to Covent Garden for the following season were correct. Grimaldi replied in the affirmative, adding, that he was engaged at the other house not only for the following season, but for the four ensuing seasons.

Mr. Graham started up in a state of considerable excitement on hearing this, and addressed the performers present, at considerable length, expatiating in strong language upon what he termed "Grimaldi's ingratitude" in leaving the theatre. Grimaldi waited patiently until he had concluded, and then, addressing himself to the same auditors, made a counter-statement, in which he recapitulated the whole of the circumstances as they had actually occurred. When he came to mention Mr. Graham's letter to Mr. Peake, the treasurer, the former hastily interrupted him by demanding what letter he referred to.

"The letter," replied Grimaldi, "in which you empowered Mr. Peake to pay the increased salary for the whole of the season."

"If Mr. Peake showed you that letter," replied Mr. Graham, in a great passion, "Mr. Peake is a fool for his pains."

"Mr. Peake," rejoined Grimaldi, "is a gentleman, sir, and a man of honour, and, I am quite certain, disdains being made a party to any such unworthy conduct as you have pursued towards me."

A rather stormy scene followed, from which Grimaldi came off victorious; Barrymore and others taking up his cause so vigorously, that Mr. Graham at length postponed any further

This resolve gave rise to another battle between Mr. Graham and himself, in the course of which he was pleased to say, that he could not play the ballet without him, and, consequently, that if he left, he would bring an action against him for loss incurred by its not being performed. Grimaldi, however, firmly adhered to his original resolution: acting therein upon the advice of Mr. Hughes, who strenuously counselled him by no means to depart from it.

Considering himself now at perfect liberty until Easter, he entered into an engagement to perform at Astley's theatre in Dublin, which had just been taken for a short period by Messrs. Charles and Thomas Dibdin. These gentlemen had engaged the greater part of the Sadler's Wells' company, including Bologna and his wife (who had been engaged by Mr. Harris for the next season at Covent Garden on the same day as Grimaldi himself), and they offered Grimaldi fourteen guineas a-week for himself, and two for his wife, half a clear benefit at the end of the season, and all his travelling expenses both by land and sea.

On the 9th of November he closed his engagement at Drury Lane, performing Pan in the ballet of "Terpsichore." He started on the following morning, accompanied by his wife, for Dublin, leaving his little son, who was in very weak health, at home. They had a very tedious journey to Holyhead, and a very stormy one from thence to Dublin; experiencing the usual troubles from cold, sickness, fatigue, and otherwise, by the way. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dibdin, who had arrived first, received them with much cordiality and kindness; and they took lodgings at the house of a Mr. Davis, in Peter-street.

On Monday, November the 18th, the theatre opened, and their

business until the Saturday morning, which made him uneasy; though the fact simply was, that the people were waiting to see how the weather would turn out; very well knowing that if it were a wet night, the theatre would be the very worst place in which to encounter the rain. Fortune, however, was propitious; the day was cloudless, fair, and beautiful; and the result was, that after having at nine o'clock in the morning no one place taken except the two boxes bespoken by Captain Trench, at one o'clock in the afternoon not a single place remained unlet. At one time, when there was no doubt of the weather remaining dry, there were no fewer than sixteen carriages standing before his door, the owners of which were all anxious to obtain places, and all of whom he was reluctantly compelled to disappoint.

The receipts of the house amounted to one hundred and ninety-seven pounds nineteen shillings, not to mention a variety of presents, including a magnificent gold snuff-box, from Captain Trench, which was worth, in weight alone, more than thirty pounds sterling.

This purchase of Dibdin's half of the benefit for twenty pounds was not only a very fortunate thing for Grimaldi, but was, on the other hand, in some degree serviceable to Dibdin also, inasmuch as it enabled Grimaldi to oblige him with a loan of one hundred pounds, of which at that moment, in consequence of his undeserved misfortunes, he stood much in need. This advance, together with salary due and other matters, left Mr. Dibdin indebted to Grimaldi in the sum of one hundred and ninety-six pounds, the whole of which was honourably repaid a few months afterwards.

This benefit closed the season of the "wet" Theatre in Peter Street; and on the following Monday Grimaldi and the rest

came out,—namely, “Harlequin *Æsop*,” and “Coa and Zoa, or the Rival Indians,”—were found quite attractive enough for the whole period. He did not appear in any other part, even for a single night, during the whole of his engagement.

On Sunday, March the 30th, they packed up, and at ten o'clock in the evening of Monday went on board the packet, in which they had taken their berths to Holyhead, after receiving the warmest and kindest hospitality from every person they had encountered in Dublin. With only one letter of introduction, Grimaldi had found himself in the course of a few days surrounded by friends whose hospitality and cordiality, not only of profession, but of action, were beyond all bounds: one would invite him to dinner, and be personally affronted by his not dining with him every day; another who wished to pay him a similar attention, but whose dinner-hour would have interfered with the rehearsal, only gave up his claim upon the condition that his wife and himself should dine with him every Sunday; a third placed a jaunting-car at his disposal, and sent it to his door at eleven o'clock every morning; and a fourth expected him to meet a small party at supper regularly every night. He had heard and read a great deal of Irish hospitality, but had formed no conception of its extent and heartiness until he experienced its effects in his own person.

He was much struck, as most Englishmen are, by the enormous consumption of whisky-punch, and the facility with which the good folks of Dublin swallow tumbler after tumbler of it, without any visible symptoms of intoxication. He entertained a theory that some beverage of equal strength, to which they were unaccustomed, would be as trying to them as their whisky-

eminently successful, asserting that one-fourth of the quantity which the guests would have drunk with complete impunity, had it been their ordinary beverage, quite overset them ; and states with great glee, that Mr. Davis, his landlord, who could drink his seven tumblers of whisky-punch, and go to bed afterwards rather dull from excessive sobriety, was carried up stairs after one tumbler of the new composition, decidedly drunk. We are inclined to think, however, that Mr. Davis had been taking a few tumblers of whisky-punch in his own parlour before he went up stairs to qualify himself for the party, and that the success of the experiment is not sufficiently well established to justify us in impressing it on the public mind without the addition of this trifling qualification.

CHAPTER XII.

1806 to 1807.

He returns to town, gets frozen to the roof of a coach on the road, and pays his rent twice over when he arrives at home—Mr. Charles Farley—His first appearance at Covent Garden—Valentine and Orson—Production of “Mother Goose,” and its immense success—The mysterious Adventure of the Six Ladies and the Six Gentlemen.

THEY were six days getting back to London, the weather being very inclement, and the travelling very indifferent. Through a mistake of the booking-office keeper, Grimaldi had to travel the earlier portion of the road from Holyhead outside the coach. The cold was so intense, and the frost so severe, that he actually got frozen to his seat; and when the coach arrived at Red Landford, it was with some difficulty that he was lifted off, and conveyed into an inn in a complete state of exhaustion and helplessness. His feet were bathed in brandy, and various other powerful stimulants applied with the view of restoring suspended circulation, but several hours elapsed before he recovered, and it was not until the following morning that he was enabled to resume his journey towards London, where he at length arrived without further hindrance or accident.

He had no sooner returned to town than an unpleasant circumstance occurred, as if in especial illustration of his often-remarked remark, that he never had a sum of money but some un-

assistant in the best parlour, engaged in coolly taking an inventory of his goods and chattels.

“What on earth is the meaning of this?” he inquired.

“Only an execution for rent,” replied the broker, continuing his instructions to his amanuensis; “Mirror in gilt frame, William.”

The tenant replied that it was quite impossible, and searching among his papers, found and produced the receipt for his rent.

The broker looked it over with a cheerful smile, and then, with many legal phrases, proceeded to apprise him that the landlord himself was but a lessee, and that, in consequence of his not having paid his rent, the head landlord had determined to seize upon whatever property was found upon the premises.

Greatly annoyed at this information, he hurried to Mr. Hughes, his constant adviser in all difficulties, to consult with him. Having narrated the affair, Mr. Hughes asked what was the amount claimed.

“Eighty-four pounds.”

“Well, then, Joe,” said he, “you must pay it, or lose your furniture.”

Accordingly he returned home very indignant, and handed over the specified sum to the broker, who said nothing could be more satisfactory, and walked away accompanied by his assistant.

The next morning the landlord came, and being ushered in, expressed much trouble in his countenance, and said that he was very glad to see Mr. Grimaldi and such a fine morning together.

“But I beg your pardon,” he added; “I don’t think you know me.”

declared his sorrow for what had occurred, and, as some light reparation for the loss and wrong, proposed to assign the lease to him. Grimaldi under all the circumstances was extremely glad to accede to the proposal, and cheerfully paid all the legal expenses contingent upon the transfer.

The upshot of the matter was, that, a very short time afterwards, he received another communication from the same landlord, in which he imparted the very unexpected fact, that either party to the lease had a discretionary power of cancelling it at that period if he thought proper, and that he intended to avail himself of the clause, unless indeed Mr. Grimaldi would prefer retaining the house at an advanced rent, which he was at liberty to do if he pleased. An inspection of the deed proved but too clearly that this statement was correct; so the eighty-four pounds were lost, together with the legal charges for the assignment of the lease and the costs of the execution; and the burden of an increased rent was imposed upon the unlucky tenant into the bargain.

His old articles at Sadler's Wells expiring this year, he entered into a fresh engagement, under which he bound himself to that theatre for three years, at a weekly salary of twelve pounds and two clear benefits. The pantomime produced at Easter was entitled, "Harlequin and the Forty Virgins," and proved remarkably successful, running indeed through the whole of the season. In this piece he sang a song called "Me and my Neddy," which afterwards became highly popular, and was in everybody's mouth. Several presents were made to him by admirers of his performance, and, among others, a very handsome watch, the face of which was so contrived as to represent a portrait of himself in the act of singing the romantic ditty

being abroad in the evening, in the spring and summer of the year. During the greater portion of his life in those seasons, he had entered Sadler's Wells every night at six o'clock, and remained there until twelve. The novelty of being at liberty before it was yet dark was so great, that he scarcely knew what to do with himself, sometimes strolling about the streets in perfect astonishment at finding himself there, and then turning home in pure lack of employment.

On the opening of Covent Garden Theatre in October,* he became first acquainted with Mr. Farley, between whom and himself a very warm and sincere friendship ever after existed. This gentleman inquired in what character he would wish to make his first appearance. He mentioned Scaramouch in "Don Juan," which had been one of his most successful parts at the other house; but Mr. Farley suggested Orson, in "Valentine and Orson," urging that the drama, which had not been acted for several years, had been very popular with the town, and that Orson was a character well suited to his abilities, in which it was very probable he would make a great hit. Grimaldi

* Covent Garden Theatre commenced the season of 1806-7, on September 15, with Colman's comedy of "John Bull," and the farce of the "Miser." Mrs. Grimaldi was, on September 22, one of the singing-women in the Anthem, sang in Shakspeare's play of "King Henry the Eighth:" Cardinal Wolsey, Mr. Kemble; Queen Katharine, Mrs. Siddons. She was also on October 6, one of the choral-witches in Macbeth; and on the 8th enacted Dolly Trull in the Beggar's Opera: a part in which she appears to have been cast on all future representations. On October 9, not the 10th, Joe made his *début* on the boards of old Covent Garden, as Orson, on the revival of Tom Dibdin's "Valentine and Orson." Dubois had, on its previous representation at that theatre, obtained unequivocal applause from the art he displayed in his performance of Orson. Bologna, jun. also made his first appearance, after an absence of two years, as the "Sorcerer Agramant; or, The Green Knight." The part of the second page in this piece, introduced to the stage a boy named Smalley, with a surprising excellence of voice, who, by some kind soul was rescued from wretchedness and obscurity, and will long be remembered by those in whose recollection the

at once consented to play the part, merely requesting that Mr. Farley would be good enough to give him some instruction in it, as he had never seen any portion of the piece, and was at some loss how to study the character. Mr. Farley readily agreed to do so, and faithfully kept his word.

It has been sometimes said, and indeed stated in print, that Grimaldi was a pupil and copyist of Dubois. No greater mistake can be made : if he can be said to have been the pupil of anybody, Mr. Farley was certainly his master, as he not only took infinite pains to instruct him in the character of Orson, but afterwards gave him very valuable advice and great assistance in getting up many other parts, in which he was also highly successful.

He was very anxious about his first appearance at Covent Garden, and studied Orson with great assiduity and application for some time. He made his first appearance in the character on the 10th of October, 1806, Farley playing Valentine. The piece, which was received with most decided success, was acted nearly every night until the production of the pantomime at Christmas rendered its withdrawal imperative.

The part of Orson was in Grimaldi's opinion the most difficult he ever had to play ; the multitude of passions requiring to be portrayed, and the rapid succession in which it was necessary to present them before the spectators, involving an unusual share both of mental and physical exertion upon the part of the performer. He played this character both in town and country on many occasions, but the effect produced upon him by the exertions of the last scene of the first act was always the same. As soon as the act-drop fell, he would stagger off the stage into a small room behind the prompter's box, and there sinking into an arm-chair, give full vent to the emotions which

ment of his being "called," whether he would be able to go upon the stage for the second act. He never failed, however; extraordinary as his sufferings were, his fear of not being ready as the time for his call approached, and the exertions he made to conquer those painful feelings, invariably enabled him to rally at the necessary time,—a curious instance of the power of habit in enabling him to struggle successfully with the weaknesses which no length of habit, and no repetition of the same part, however frequent, were sufficient to banish.

The effect produced on the audience by his personation of this character was intense: it enhanced his reputation greatly, bringing him before the public in quite a new line. The compliments and congratulations which he received from persons ranking high in his own profession, in literature, and in the fine arts, bore high testimony to the merit and striking character of this singular performance.

Preparations now began to be made for the production of "Mother Goose," destined to acquire a degree of popularity quite unprecedented in the history of pantomime, and to occupy a place in the choicest recollections of the play-goers of the time.

At Drury Lane, the Management, well knowing that great preparations were making at Covent Garden for the production of a new harlequinade on the 26th of December, and dreading the advantage they had gained in securing Grimaldi, hurried on the preparations for their own pantomime, and engaging Montgomery, who had acquired some celebrity at the Circus, at a high salary, to play Clown, produced their pantomime on the 23rd, thus gaining an advantage of three days over the other house. The piece, however, partook infinitely more of the

prudent to drop the curtain, long before the intended conclusion of the piece. Grimaldi and his friend Bologna were present, and were very far from regretting this failure. Up to that time Drury Lane had always been more successful in pantomime than the other house; and there is little doubt, that the production of this unsuccessful but very splendid piece, three days before the usual time, was intended not merely to crush the pantomime in preparation at Covent Garden, but Grimaldi too, if possible.

They had a night rehearsal of "Mother Goose" on the ensuing evening, and the performers were in a state of great anxiety and uncertainty as to its fate. It had always been the custom to render a pantomime the vehicle for the display of gorgeous scenery and splendid dresses; on the last scene especially, the energies of every person in the theatre connected with the decoration of the stage were profusely lavished, the great question with the majority of the town being which pantomime had the finest conclusion. Mother Goose had none of these accessories; it had neither gorgeous processions, nor gaudy banners, nor splendid scenery, nor showy dresses. There was not even a spangle used in the piece, with the exception of those which decked the Harlequin's jacket, and even they would have been dispensed with but for Grimaldi's advice. The last scene too was as plain as possible, and the apprehensions of the performers were proportionately rueful.

But all these doubts were speedily set at rest; for on the production of the pantomime on the 26th of December, 1806, it was received with the most deafening shouts of applause, and played for ninety-two nights, being the whole remainder of the season. The houses it drew were immense: the doors were no sooner open than the theatre was filled; and every time it was played

"The Honey Moon" lay neglected on the manager's shelf for many years, it being considered impossible that an audience would be found to sit out its representation.

Grimaldi's opinion of Mother Goose—it may or may not be another instance of the bad judgment of actors—always remained pretty much the same, notwithstanding its great success. He considered the pantomime, as a whole, a very indifferent one, and always declared his own part to be one of the worst he ever played; nor was there a trick or situation in the piece to which he had not been well accustomed for many years before. However this may be, there is little doubt that the exertions of Bologna and himself, as Harlequin and Clown, contributed in a very important degree to the success of the piece; it being worthy of remark, that whenever the pantomime has been played without the original Harlequin and Clown, it has invariably gone off flatly, and generally failed to draw.

On the 9th of June he took a benefit in conjunction with Bologna, upon which occasion Mother Goose was played for the eighty-second* time. The receipts amounted to 679*l.* 18*s.*

During the run of this pantomime he fell curiously into a new and mysterious circle of acquaintance. The mystery which overhung them, the manner of his introduction, their style of living,

* On the night of the joint benefit of Grimaldi and Bologna, June 9, 1807, Macklin's "Man of the World," was performed; Sir Pertinax, by Mr. Cooke; a new comic ballet, entitled "Poor Jack," Poor Jack, by Mr. Bologna, jun. Joe also sang Dibdin's song of "The Country Club," often previously sung by him at Sadler's Wells, with reiterated plaudits. The evening's entertainments concluded with "Mother Goose," for the eighty-eighth time, not the eighty-second.

In the preceding April, on the 16th, was produced at Covent Garden, for the first time, a grand ballet of action, entitled "The Ogre and Little Thumb; or, the Seven League Boots;" Anthrophagos, the Ogre, Mr. Farley: Count Manfredi. Mr. Bologna, jun.: Scamperini the Count's Sergeant. Mr. Grimaldi:

and his subsequent discovery of their rank and title, are not a little curious.

On the 6th of January, 1807, a gentleman called at his house in Baynes' Row, and desiring to see him was shown into the parlour. In this person he was surprised to recognise his quondam friend Mackintosh who owned the preserves. He apologised for calling, entered into conversation with great ease, and trusted that the little trick he had played in mere thoughtlessness might be completely forgiven. Being courteously requested not to trouble himself by referring to it, Mr. Mackintosh went on to say, that his mother had sold, not her mangle, but her inn, and had retired to a distant part of the country ; while he himself having attached himself to business, had come to reside permanently in London, and had taken a house and offices in Throgmorton-street, in the City.

Mr. Mackintosh's appearance was extremely smart, his manners were greatly improved, and altogether he had acquired much polish and refinement since the days of the chaise-cart and the fustian jacket. As, notwithstanding the absurd scrape into which he had led his guests, he had treated them very hospitably, Grimaldi invited him to dine on the following Sunday. He came in due course ; his conversation was jocose and amusing, and becoming a favourite at the house, he frequently dined or supped there: Grimaldi and his wife occasionally doing the same with him in Throgmorton-street, where he had a very business-looking establishment, plainly but genteelly furnished.

About a month after his first calling, he waited upon Grimaldi one morning, and said that some friends of his residing in Charlotte-street, Fitzroy-square, were very anxious to make his

person, and that he preferred adhering to his old custom of supping at home with his wife after the play. Mackintosh, however, urged that his friends were very wealthy people, that he would find them very useful and profitable acquaintances, and by these and a thousand other persuasions, overcame his disinclination to go. He consented, and an evening was fixed for the visit.

On the appointed night, as soon as he had finished at the theatre, he called a coach and directed the driver to set him down at the address which Mackintosh had given him. The coach stopped before a very large house, apparently handsomely furnished, and brilliantly lighted up. Not having any idea that the man could possess friends who lived in such style, he at first supposed that the driver had made a mistake; but while they were discussing the point, Mackintosh, elegantly dressed, darted out of the passage, and, taking his arm, conducted him into a brilliant supper-room.

If the outside of the house had given him cause for astonishment, its internal appearance redoubled his surprise. Everything was on a scale of the most costly splendour: the spacious rooms were elegantly papered and gilded, elegant chandeliers depended from the ceilings, the richest carpets covered the floors, and the other furniture, too, was of the most expensive description. The supper comprised a choice variety of luxuries, and was splendidly served; the costliest wines of various kinds and vintages sparkled upon the table.

There were just twelve persons in the supper-room, besides Mackintosh and himself—to wit, six ladies and six gentlemen, who were all introduced as married people. The first couple to whom he was introduced were of course the host and hostess.

liveries, and the whole scene was so totally different from anything he had anticipated that he was thoroughly bewildered, and actually began to doubt the reality of what he saw. The politeness of the gentlemen, and the graceful ease of the ladies, however, soon restored his self-possession; while the delicious flavour of the wines and dishes convinced him that with respect to that part of the business, at all events, he was labouring under no delusion.

In eating, drinking, singing, and story-telling, the night wore on till past five o'clock, when he was at length suffered to return home. A recital of all the circumstances astonished his wife not a little; and he was quite as much amazed at recollecting what he had seen, as she at hearing of it.

A few days afterward, Mackintosh called again; hoped he had enjoyed himself, was delighted to hear he had, and bore an invitation for the next night.

To this Grimaldi urged all the objections he had before mentioned, and added to them an expression of his unwillingness to leave his wife at home. Mr. Mackintosh, with great forethought, had mentioned this in Charlotte-street; he was commissioned to invite her, Mrs. Farmer trusting she would come in a friendly way and excuse the formality of her calling.

Well, there was no resisting this; so Grimaldi and his wife went to Charlotte-street next night, and there were the rooms, and the six ladies and the six gentlemen, and the chandeliers, and the wax-lights, and the liveries, and, what was more to the purpose than all, the supper, all over again.

There were several other parties after this; and then the six ladies and the six gentlemen *would* come and see Mr. Grimaldi

much, and were very friendly and kind, the visit passed off to the admiration of all parties.

There was some mystery about these great friends, which the worthy couple were quite unable to solve. It did not appear that they were connected by any other ties than those of friendship, and yet they were always together, and never had a stranger among them; there were always the same six ladies and the same six gentlemen, the only change being in their dresses, which varied in make and colour, but never in quality. Then they did not seem to be in any business, and there was a something in the politeness of the gentlemen and the jocoseness of the ladies which struck them as rather peculiar, although they could never tell what it was. Grimaldi saw that they were not like the noblemen and gentlemen he was in the habit of meeting in the green-rooms of the theatres; and yet, notwithstanding that he pondered upon the matter a great deal, he could not for the life of him discover in what the difference consisted. His wife was in just the same state of perplexity; but although they talked the matter over very often, they never arrived at any tangible conclusion. While they were thinking about it, the parties kept going on, and January and February passed away.

On the 13th of March he had promised to act, in conjunction with Messrs. Bartley, Simmons, Chapman, and Louis Bologna, at the Woolwich Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Lund. Chancing to mention the circumstance at one of the Charlotte-street parties a few days before the time, Mr. Farmer immediately proposed that he and the other five gentlemen should accompany their excellent friend; that they should all sup together at Woolwich after the theatre was over, and set on to town.

The five gentlemen were punctual, and they, Mackintosh, and Grimaldi, started together. They dined at Woolwich, and afterwards adjourned to the theatre, where the five gentlemen and Mackintosh went into the boxes, and Grimaldi upon the stage. The five gentlemen talked very loud, and applauded very much; and their magnificent appearance created quite a sensation, not only among the audience, but the actors also. They supped together at the hotel at which they had dined: slept there, and returned to town next day; Mr. Farmer and the four gentlemen coming home in a barouche; Mackintosh, Grimaldi, and some other professional persons preferring to walk, for the benefit of the exercise.

Upon the way, Grimaldi sounded Mackintosh relative to the professions, connexions, and prospects of his friends; but he evaded making any reply, further than by observing, with an air of great respect, that they were very wealthy people. He dined in Throgmorton-street a few days afterwards, and again tried to penetrate the mystery, as did his wife, who accompanied him. Mr. Mackintosh threw no light upon it, but it was destined to be shortly revealed, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER XIII.

1807.

The mystery is cleared up, chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Alderman Harmer ; and the characters of the six Ladies and the six Gentlemen are satisfactorily explained. The Trial of Mackintosh for Burglary—Its result.

ABOUT three weeks had elapsed since the last dinner in Throgmorton-street, during the whole of which time nothing had been seen or heard either of the six ladies or of the six gentlemen, when, as Grimaldi was sitting reading in his parlour, a strange gentleman was shown into the room. As he was accustomed to be waited upon by many people of whom he knew nothing, he requested the gentleman to take a chair, and after a few commonplace remarks upon the weather and the papers, begged to ask his business with him.

“Why, my business with you, Mr. Grimaldi,” said the stranger, putting down his hat, as if he had come to stop a long time, “is of a very peculiar nature. Perhaps I had better commence by telling you who I am. My name is Harmer.”

“Harmer?” said Grimaldi, running over in his mind all the theatrical names he had ever heard.

“Mr. James Harmer, of Hatton Garden. The reason of my waiting upon you is this,—I wish to speak to you upon a very

enough to explain the nature of the communication he had to make, as explicitly as he could.

"To come, then, at once to the point," said Mr. Harmer,—
"do you not know a person of the name of Mackintosh?"

"Yes, certainly," replied Grimaldi, his thoughts flying off at a tangent, first to Throgmorton-street, and then to the ladies and gentlemen in Charlotte-street—"oh yes, I know him."

"He is now," said Mr. Harmer, solemnly, "in great danger of losing his life."

Grimaldi at once supposed his visitor was a doctor,—said he was very sorry to hear it, asked how long he had been ill, and begged to know what was the matter with him.

"His bodily health is good enough," replied Mr. Harmer, with a half-smile. "In the course of my professional career, Mr. Grimaldi, I have known many men in imminent danger of losing their lives, who have been in most robust health."

Grimaldi bowed his head, and presumed his visitor referred to cases in which the patient had gone off suddenly. Mr. Harmer said that he certainly did, and that he had strong reason to fear Mr. Mackintosh would go off one morning very suddenly indeed.

"I greatly regret to hear it," said the other. "But pray tell me his condition without reserve: you may safely be communicative to me. What is the nature of the disorder? what is it called?"

"Burglary," answered Mr. Harmer, quaintly.

"Burglary!" exclaimed Grimaldi, trembling from head to foot.

"Nothing less," replied Mr. Harmer. "The state of the case, Mr. Grimaldi, is something: Mackintosh is accused of having

This intelligence so amazed Grimaldi, that he fell into a chair as if he had been shot, and it was some little time before he was sufficiently recovered to resume the conversation. The moment he could do so, he hastened to explain that he had never supposed Mackintosh to be other than an honest man, or he would carefully have shunned all acquaintance with him.

"He has been anything but an honest man for a long time past," said Mr. Harmer: "still, I may say that he is anxious to reform; and at all events, I am certain that this particular robbery was not committed by him."

"Good God! and he still likely to be hung for it!"

"Certain," said Mr. Harmer; "unless we can prove an *alibi*. There is only one man who has it in his power to do so; and that man, Mr. Grimaldi, is yourself."

"Then," said Mr. Grimaldi, "you may command me."

In a lengthened and, to him, very interesting conversation which ensued, he learned that the robbery had been committed on the 13th of March, on the very night on which he had played for Lund's benefit at Woolwich, and afterwards supped with Mackintosh and his friends. This accidental circumstance was of course of the last importance to Mr. Harmer's client, and that gentleman receiving a promise from Grimaldi that he would make an affidavit of the fact, if required, wished him a good morning and left him.

Mackintosh being admitted to bail a few days afterwards, called upon Grimaldi to express his gratitude for the readiness with which he had consented to give his important evidence. The insight into the man's character which Mr. Harmer had given him, rendered him of course desirous to be as little in his

men, he dissembled his dislike, and placed some refreshment before him, of which he partook. He then said,

“Mr. Mackintosh, I cannot suppose you to be guilty of any act of this kind, for you have so many circumstances in your favour. Putting myself out of the question,—I am merely an actor, working for my subsistence,—you can call, to prove your *alibi*, gentlemen of station and undoubted respectability. Mr. Farmer and his friends, for instance, could not fail to have great weight with the court.”

A very perceptible change overspread the countenance of Mr. Mackintosh when he heard these words. He shook his head with great vehemence, and looked strongly disposed to laugh. Grimaldi, who was one of the simplest creatures in all worldly matters that ever breathed, paused for a reply, but finding his acquaintance said nothing, added,

“Besides,—the ladies. Dear me, Mr. Mackintosh, the appearance of those gentlemen’s wives would be almost enough to acquit you at once.”

“Mr. Grimaldi,” said Mackintosh, with a slight tremor in his voice which, despite his serious situation, arose from an incipient tendency to laughter,—“Mr. Grimaldi, none of those women are married.”

Grimaldi stared incredulously.

“Not one,” said Mackintosh : “they only pass for married people—they are not really so.”

“Then how,” said Grimaldi, waxing very angry, “how dared you to invite my wife among them, and induce me to take her there !”

“I’m very sorry, sir,” said the man, humbly.

“Mr. Grimaldi,” replied the man, with great apparent humility, “they would not come if they were sent for; and besides, if they did, it would injure, not assist me, for they are all marked men.”

“Marked men!” exclaimed Grimaldi.

“Too true, sir,” said Mackintosh; “desperate characters every one.”

“What! Farmer?”

“He was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey, and got a reprieve while standing on the drop beneath the gallows.”

“And Williams?”

“Williams is a forger of notes.”

“And Jesson?”

“He and Barber are both burglars.”

“And the Jewish-looking man,—I forget the rascal’s name,—the man who sings Kelly’s songs; what is he?”

“Oh, he helps to pass the forged notes, and has been three times in the pillory.”

“There is one other man whom I have not named—that fellow Jones; what is he? a murderer?”

“No, sir, only a burglar,” answered Mackintosh. “Don’t you recollect, Mr. Grimaldi, that he would not join the party to Woolwich?”

“Perfectly well.”

“Well, sir, the truth is, he left town for Cheshire the same day the party was proposed, and he is the man who actually committed the deed I am charged with. He did the robbery. I found it out only to-day; but, though I know it, I can’t prove it now:—and all those people in Charlotte-street are doing their best to get me found guilty, and save the real man, who is better

whelmed their unfortunate victim. He was thoroughly stupefied for some minutes, and then, starting up with uncontrollable fury, seized the man by the throat, and demanded how he durst take him among such a horde of villains, under pretence of being his friend. Mackintosh, alarmed at this unexpected ebullition of resentment, fell on his knees before him in the most abject manner, and poured forth many entreaties for mercy, and protestations of regret.

"Answer me one question," said Grimaldi, releasing his hold; "give me a plain and straightforward answer, for it's only by telling me the truth now, that you can hope for any leniency at my hands. What was your motive for taking me into the company of these men and women, and why did they want to have me among them?"

"I'll tell you the truth, by God!" replied Mackintosh, "and without the smallest attempt at disguise. They thought you must be very good company, and hearing me say that I knew you, gave me no rest until I consented to take you to the house in Charlotte-street; which I at last agreed to do, stipulating, upon my soul, that no harm should ever be done you, and that their real characters should be carefully concealed. You turned out as they expected; they were very much delighted with your songs and stories, and I was obliged to promise to bring you again. And that's the truth."

Although this explanation relieved him from some very terrible fears relative to the motives of these persons in seeking his companionship, it was a very galling reflection to have been playing the jester to a gang of robbers and vagabonds; and as it presented itself to his mind, it drove him almost mad with rage. Never accustomed to give way to his passions, the fit of

About a week after this agreeable visit, Grimaldi was sitting at breakfast one morning, when his servant announced a lady, and in walked—as he sat paralysed with surprise—no less a person than Mrs. Farmer, who, sitting down with great composure and freedom, said, when the servant had left the room,

“Well, Grim, here’s Jack Mackintosh has got himself into a pretty hobble, hasn’t he?”

“He has indeed,” said Grim, all abroad with amazement, “and I am very sorry for it.”

“Lord! you don’t mean that!” returned the lady: “I’m sure it’s more than I am. Of course, it’s everybody’s turn one time; and Jack’s had a very long string.”

It being now thoroughly evident that the party, deeming longer concealment hopeless, wished to treat Grimaldi as one of themselves, and to imply that he had been acquainted with their real characters all along, he resolved to act decidedly; so, the moment the lady had finished speaking, said,

“By some extraordinary mistake and blindness I have been led into the society of yourself and your associates, ma’am. I regret this bitterly for many reasons, but for two especially: first, that I should ever have had acquaintance with such characters; and secondly, that it compels me to act with apparent harshness to a woman. As I have no other course to pursue, however, I beg you will have the goodness to tell the ladies and gentlemen whom I have had the unhappiness to meet in Charlotte-street, that I request them never to show their faces here; and that I wish never to see, and certainly shall never speak to any of them again.”

The servant entering the room at this point, in reply to the summons he had previously given, he continued,

Sadler's Wells opened the season of 1807 with a new piece, called the "Ogre," in which he enacted a character dignified by the name of "Scamperino." This drama was not very successful, lingering only through ten nights; but as he was wanted of course in something else, and had every night to hurry to Covent Garden afterwards, to play the clown in "Mother Goose," which was still running with unabated spirit, he endured very great fatigue for more than three months, during which the two theatres were open together.*

In the July of this year a very extraordinary circumstance occurred at Sadler's Wells, which was the great topic of conversation in the neighbourhood for some time afterwards. It happened thus:—

Captain George Harris, of the Royal Navy, who was related to the Mr. Harris of Covent Garden, and with whom Grimaldi was slightly acquainted, had recently returned to England after a long voyage. The crew being paid off, many of the men followed their commander up to London, and proceeded to enjoy themselves after the usual fashion of sailors. Sadler's Wells was at that time a famous place of resort with the blue-jackets, the gallery being sometimes almost solely occupied by seamen and their female companions. A large body of Capt. Harris's men resorted hither one night, and amongst them a man who

* Sadler's Wells opened the season of 1807 on Easter Monday, March 30th, with a new pantomime, entitled "Jan Ben Jan, or Harlequin and the Forty Virgins." Ridgway made his first appearance as Harlequin, Bologna, jun., having seceded from the theatre. Among other debutants on that night, was Pyne, the singer, as also Mrs. M'Cartney, who subsequently became Mrs. Pyne. Grimaldi, as usual, was clown in the pantomime, which had a long and successful run. In the scene of the interior of Pidecock's menagerie, at Exeter 'Change, he spoke and sang "The Exhibitor's Chant," which became highly popular. The journalists of that time were of one accord; the inimitable jolliness of the clown was the principal cause of the crowded lobbies and the

was deaf and dumb, and had been so for many years. This man was placed by his shipmates in the front row of the gallery. Grimaldi was in great force that night, and, although the audience were in one roar of laughter, nobody appeared to enjoy his fun and humour more than this poor fellow. His companions good-naturedly took a good deal of notice of him, and one of them, who talked very well with his fingers, inquired how he liked the entertainments; to which the deaf and dumb man replied, through the same medium, and with various gestures of great delight, that he had never seen anything half so comical before.

As the scene progressed, Grimaldi's tricks and jokes became still more irresistible; and at length, after a violent peal of laughter and applause which quite shook the theatre, and in which the dumb man joined most heartily, he suddenly turned to his mate, who sat next to him, and cried out with much glee, "What a d——d funny fellow!"

"Why, Jack," shouted the other man, starting back with great surprise: "can you speak?"

"Speak!" returned the other; "ay, that I can, and hear, too."

Upon this the whole party, of course, gave three vehement cheers, and at the conclusion of the piece adjourned in a great procession to the "Sir Hugh Middleton," hard by, with the recovered man, elevated on the shoulders of half a dozen friends, in the centre. A crowd of people quickly assembled round the door, and great excitement and curiosity were occasioned as the intelligence ran from mouth to mouth, that a deaf and dumb man had come to speak and hear, all owing to the cleverness of Joey Grimaldi.

The landlady of the tavern, thinking Grimaldi would like to

house at the appointed time, and saw him, accompanied by several of his companions, all of whom still continued to manifest the liveliest interest in the sudden change that had happened to their friend, and kept on cheering, and drinking, and treating everybody in the house, in proof of their gratification. The man, who appeared an intelligent well-behaved fellow, said, that in the early part of his life he could both speak and hear very well; and that he had attributed his deprivation of the two senses to the intense heat of the sun in the quarter of the world to which he had been, and from which he had very recently returned. He added, that on the previous evening he had for a long time felt a powerful anxiety to express his delight at what was passing on the stage; and that, after some feat of Grimaldi's which struck him as being particularly amusing, he had made a strong effort to deliver his thoughts, in which, to his own great astonishment, no less than that of his comrades, he succeeded. Mr. Charles Dibdin, who was present, put several questions to the man; and, from his answers, it appeared to every one present, that he was speaking the truth. Indeed, his story was in some measure confirmed by Captain Harris himself; for one evening, about six months afterwards as Grimaldi was narrating the circumstance in the green-room at Covent Garden, that gentleman, who chanced to be present, immediately remarked that he had no reason, from the man's behaviour while with him, to suppose him an impostor, and that he had seen him on that day in the full possession of all his senses.

In the month of August following this circumstance, Grimaldi received a subpoena to attend the trial of Mackintosh, at Stafford. He immediately gave notice to the manager of

found against Mackintosh by the grand jury, the trial came on.

Grimaldi forgets the name of the prosecutor's counsel,* and regrets the circumstance very much, observing that the lengthened notice which he bestowed upon him ought to have impressed his name on his memory. If this notice were flattering on account of its length, it certainly was not so in any other respect; inasmuch as the gentleman in question, in the exercise of that licence which many practitioners unaccustomed to briefs assume, was pleased to designate the principal witness for the prisoner, to wit, Mr. Joseph Grimaldi, as a common player, a mountebank-stroller, a man reared in and ever accustomed to vice in its most repulsive and degrading forms—a man who was necessarily a systematic liar—and, in fine, a man upon whose word or oath no thinking person could place any reliance.

During this exordium, and pending the logical deductions of the ingenious gentleman whose name is unhappily lost to his country, the prisoner eyed his witness with intense anxiety, fearing, no doubt, that in his examination, either by angry words, or by attempting to retort on the counsel, or by volunteering jokes, or by seeking revenge upon himself, against whom he had such just ground of complaint, he might pass the rope round his neck, instead of serving his cause; but his fears were needless. His witness had gone there to discharge what he considered a solemn duty; and, apart from all personal considerations, to give his honest testimony in a case involving a man's life and death. He went there, of course, prepared to give his evidence in the manner best befitting himself and the occasion; and, if he wanted any additional incentive to caution and coolness, he would have found it in the taunts of the

upon a public stage could conduct himself with perfect propriety as a private individual—in the same way as many young gentlemen, who are offensive in wigs, become harmless and obscure in social life.

No fewer than nine witnesses were examined for the prosecution, all of whom, to Grimaldi's astonishment and horror, swore positively to the identity of the prisoner. The case for the prosecution being closed, he was immediately put into the box, for the defence; when, after stating that the prisoner was in his company at Woolwich, at the time of the commission of the burglary, he proceeded to detail as briefly as he could all that had happened on the day and night in question. He carefully suppressed any extraneous matter that related to himself or his own feelings, which might have been injurious to the prisoner, and produced the playbill of the night, to prove that there could be no mistake respecting the date. He was then submitted to a very long and vexatious cross-examination, but he never lost his temper for an instant, or faltered in his testimony in any way; and at its conclusion he was well rewarded for his good feeling and impartiality, by the highly flattering terms in which the presiding judge was pleased to express his opinion of the manner in which he had conducted himself.*

His wife was the next witness called, and she fully corroborated his evidence. Two more witnesses were examined on the

* The gentleman who first revised Grimaldi's reminiscences adds the following note in this stage of the Memoirs: "That Mr. Grimaldi has not unworthily commended his own conduct in this instance, no one who has heard him speak in public will be disposed to believe. His manner was always that of a man who, while he entertained a just respect for himself, properly respected the parties to whom he addressed himself. This was strikingly exemplified whenever, in consequence of the sudden illness of a performer, or some other stage mishap, an apology became necessary; on which occasions he would step forward, and an-

same side, when the judge interposed, putting it to the jury whether they really deemed it necessary to hear any further evidence, and not hesitating to say that the full conviction on his own mind was, that the witnesses for the prosecution were mistaken, and that the prisoner at the bar was innocent of the offence laid to his charge. The jury fully coincided in the learned judge's opinion, and immediately returned a verdict of "Not guilty," after a trial which had already lasted for upwards of nine hours.

Previous to his return to town, on the following morning, Grimaldi sought and obtained a few minutes' private conversation with Mackintosh. In this interview, he used his utmost endeavours to awaken his mind to a sense of his situation, to induce him to reflect on the crimes he had committed, and to place before him the inevitable consequences of his career if he held the same course ; by all of which remonstrances the man appeared much affected, and for which he expressed himself very grateful. It was scarcely necessary for Grimaldi to add, that any communication between them must be discontinued for the future ; but, lest his true repentance might be endangered by the loss of the only friend he seemed to have, he gave him permission to write to him if he ever needed his assistance, and assured him that if it were in his power to relieve him, the appeal should never be made in vain. It says something for the honour of human nature and the sincerity of the man's repentance, that he never took undue advantage of this permission, and, indeed, was never heard of by Grimaldi again.

The witness returned to town, as he had every reason to do, with a light heart ; and as he never heard any further intelligence either of the half-dozen gentlemen, or the six Lucretias to whom he had so unwittingly introduced his wife, he experienced

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIII.

AN INTERPOLATION.

THE facts relating to Grimaldi's connexion with John Mackoull, *alias* Mackintosh, are the following :—

Mackoull, during two years previous to Michaelmas, 1804, was a publican ; he kept the George Inn, at Hayes, in Kent ; and, in his own words, in his “ Abuses of Justice,” mentions the following particulars :—“ In justice to Mr. Grimaldi, I will shortly state the commencement and nature of our acquaintance. I saw him for the first time as a guest at my house at Hayes, where, from the attention I paid him and his friends, he visited me several times.

“ Shortly after I came to London, I accidentally met him, and invited him and his wife to dine with me. The invitation was accepted, and he in turn invited me and my wife to dine ; indeed, the whole of our acquaintance consisted in several times mutually dining at each other's houses.”

Mackoull lived in White Lion-court, in Throgmorton-street, and the occasional intimacy appears to have continued till 1807, in which year, on March 13th, Lund had a benefit at the Woolwich Theatre, when the Bolognas, Grimaldi, and Norman,

Mackoull left, Grimaldi having promised to dine with him on the Wednesday following.

It so happened, that on the night of the 12th of March, or on the morning of the 13th, the Edinburgh mail-coach was robbed of a parcel, forwarded by the Newark bank to Messrs. Kensington, of Lombard-street. The parcel contained bank-notes and bills to the amount of 4500*l.*, payable in London; and was, as afterwards transpired, stolen by a man, then travelling in the mail, named Treble, who, to avoid hanging, destroyed himself. A returned transport, named Duffield, received the bills, and a strolling player, named John Knight, who, under the assumed name of Warren, at Salisbury and other places enacted Othello, and other principal characters. He became the negotiator of some of the bills by forging or indorsing them in his own theatrical name of Warren, and contrived to discount one at Burton-upon-Trent, on March 17th; another at Uttoxeter, on the 18th; a third at Congleton, on the 19th; and a fourth at Wirksworth, on the 20th. Information that some of these bills had been discounted at the above principal banks having transpired, and a description of the person who had negotiated them being transmitted, Mackoull's personal appearance was extremely similar to that of the delinquent described; and he was apprehended accordingly at his house in White Lion-court, on April 3rd, taken to the Brown Bear, in Bow-street, and on that evening charged at Bow-street with felony, having robbed the mail, and with forgery of the indorsements on the bills asserted to have been negotiated by him. He was remanded to the 8th, on which day Mackoull was again placed at the bar, Mr. Alley as his counsel, and Mr. Harmer also appearing in his defence. But it was not until the third hearing, on the 11th, that specific charges were made against him, and he was sworn to be the

torily, as Grimaldi and his wife had dined with him on the 18th of March. Mrs. Grimaldi had left them at five o'clock, to sustain her part in the Oratorio that evening at Covent Garden Theatre, and Joe had remained with Mackoull till eleven that night; it was therefore clear that he was not the person who had negotiated the bills, nor was he the party who had robbed the mail, as he had evidence in John and Louis Bologna, Grimaldi, Norman, and many others; for he was then with them at Woolwich. These circumstances being named by Mackoull to Mr. Harmer, he undertook to wait upon Mr. and Mrs. Grimaldi, which it would seem he did on the Sunday, as on the Monday, April 13th, being Mackoull's fourth examination, Mr. Alley proposed offering a satisfactory *alibi* to the charge; but, as all the witnesses had not been conferred with, desired leave to bring them forward on the following day. It is tolerably certain that Mr. Harmer had seen Grimaldi and his wife on Sunday, for Alley mentioned them, amongst others, as witnesses whom he should bring forward on the Tuesday; and till the 11th, Mackoull was not in possession of the particular charge against him.

Mackoull states that Mr. Harmer undertook to wait upon Mr. and Mrs. Grimaldi, both of whom recollected perfectly the day on which they had dined with Mackoull, previous to Mr. Harmer's apprising them with his reasons for the inquiry: both spontaneously proffered to prove the fact, before the magistrates, or otherwise, if required; hence Mr. Alley's intimation to the magistrates on the 13th, on which day a young man, named Millar, son of the police-constable, and then an under clerk at Bow-street Office, went personally to Grimaldi, and endeavoured to persuade him not to appear on the following

—more particularly, as he learned that the life of a fellow-creature was at stake; and contrary to this stripling's expectation and wishes, he attended at Bow-street, before the magistrates, Messrs. Read and Graham, on the 14th, giving in evidence the facts already stated. Two points of *alibi* were fully established by Joe. Mackoull had not committed the robbery, with which he was in the first instance charged,—because John and Louis Bologna, Grimaldi, and Norman, and many others, could and did swear that he was with them at Woolwich at the time the robbery was effected; and as to his being the person who had been the negotiator of the bills from the 17th to the 20th of March, Grimaldi's evidence was not single, and was therefore indisputable; but Mr. Kensington's professional adviser, having a wealthy plaintiff as a client, abetted his reluctance to believe Mackoull had been erroneously charged and sworn to. On the 13th, former witnesses had sworn most positively to the personal identity of Mackoull. He was the man who had negotiated the bills, notwithstanding the evidence offered in support of the *alibi*. The obstinacy of the banker Kensington made matters still worse, and Mackoull was criminally charged with five offences in the several towns and places named; four of them were capital, and a conviction on either would have involved the forfeiture of his life.

A further hearing was deferred till April 23rd, when Grimaldi and his wife again attended, and swore to the truth of their allegations: bail was tendered, offering full guarantee for Mackoull's appearance when required, but in vain; the-influence of the Lombard-street firm was paramount; bail, however unobjectionable, was refused; and again was Mackoull remanded. On the 27th, he was brought up, as he supposed,

ever, made to Sir Soulden Lawrence, one of the judges in the King's Bench, and on the affidavits of Joseph Grimaldi and his wife Mary Grimaldi, was Mackoull immediately enlarged. Mackoull may now speak for himself:—

“Two or three days previous to the assizes, my witnesses, Mr. Harmer, and myself, in all eighteen persons, left London for Stafford; my mind filled with the most gloomy apprehensions. When we arrived at Lichfield, Mr. Harmer determined to finish the briefs before he went on to Stafford. Every circumstance they could really prove was known to myself and my solicitor; he had a plain statement of facts to narrate, and though it ran to a considerable length the brief was drawn, and two copies made nearly in one day, in the following manner. As soon as Mr. Harmer had drawn a paragraph it was handed to Mr. Grimaldi, who [read or] dictated, and myself, and a young man we procured in the town wrote the fair copies for counsel.

“Early in the morning of the commission day, Mr. Harmer and myself went on to Stafford, leaving my witnesses to follow. Mr. Grimaldi was the first witness called on my behalf; he stated exactly what had been set forth in his affidavit, and the solemn manner in which he gave his testimony carried conviction, and made a lively impression upon every one present. He underwent the most strict examination; but the more he was questioned, the more apparent was the truth of his evidence; and those who expected to see the zany disgracing himself by his buffoonery, beheld him deliver his evidence with a firmness, which could only arise from conscious rectitude; yet still with that caution and dignity which should characterize every honest man, when asserting the cause of truth under the awful obliga-

by insinuating that his acquaintance with me was disreputable, and exert their abilities to make him appear ridiculous; therefore, on our way down, I hinted my fears, and begged him, for God's sake, to keep his temper, to answer every question with calmness and propriety, and not to be irritated by any interrogatories of counsel; to which he answered, 'Whatever were your transactions previous to my acquaintance I know not; but certainly I never observed anything improper in your conduct; nor did I, till this unfortunate affair, hear anything to your disadvantage: but admitting you to be the vilest character on earth, I am bound, as a man and a christian, to speak the truth; and I should consider myself highly culpable if I withheld my testimony, when, by giving it, I might prevent an innocent man from losing his life. I am going to assert nothing but the truth, to do which can dishonour no man. I assure you I am too much impressed with a sense of your unfortunate situation to be otherwise than serious; and I trust those who hear me will be properly satisfied, that I know my duty when giving testimony in a court of justice, as well as when performing before an audience at a public theatre.' These were his observations, and he fully verified them.

"Mrs. Grimaldi was next called, and confirmed the testimony of her husband in every particular.

"Mr. Dauncey, the counsel for the prosecution, in his opening speech, had mentioned that I kept houses of a certain description, and endeavoured to impress the minds of the jury with a belief that no credit was to be given to any witness who could visit or associate with me. He even said it was material to consider whether I and my witnesses were not

“Mr. Justice Graham, in addressing the jury, told them he conceived they must entertain the same opinion with himself, that the witnesses for the prosecution had mistaken Mackoull for the person who had committed the offences, and if so, it would be unnecessary for him to sum up the evidence. The jury instantly expressed their concurrence with the opinion of the judge; and, after a trial of nine hours, Mackoull was pronounced—Not guilty.

“How impotent now appeared the whole phalanx of my opponent. During the examination of Mr. and Mrs. Grimaldi, young Millar was in the outer hall taunting the rest of my witnesses. He said ‘he should soon do away with their evidence, and that, when he was called, it would be all over with me.’ When Mrs. Grimaldi came out of court he personally insulted her.

“Notwithstanding the satisfactory manner in which my innocence was established, my acquittal was attributed to base and unworthy means. It was said that Grimaldi was, no doubt, well paid for perjuring himself. The reputation of Mr. Grimaldi is so well established, that he cannot be affected by the gross slanders circulated respecting his evidence. He is well known to be incapable of a dishonourable action; and far from being paid to give false testimony, he was a loser of his salary for the time he was absent. It is true, I offered to pay him the amount, but he generously declined accepting it, saying, he felt the injuries I had suffered, and would not add to my distress by receiving a shilling.

“Facts have their point-marks as pleasurable as the enspanlements of fable.”

CHAPTER XIV.

1807 to 1808.

Bradbury, the Clown.—His voluntary confinement in a Madhouse, to screen an “Honourable” Thief.—His release, strange conduct, subsequent career, and death.—Dreadful Accident at Sadler’s Wells.—The Night-drives to Finchley.—Trip to Birmingham.—Mr. Macready, the Manager, and his curious Stage-properties.—Sudden recall to Town.

ON his return to town, of course, he went immediately to Sadler’s Wells; where, however, to his great surprise, he was informed by Mr. Dibdin that he was not wanted just yet, inasmuch as Bradbury had been engaged for a fortnight, and had not been there above half the time. He added, too, that Bradbury had made a great hit, and become very popular.

This intelligence vexed Grimaldi not a little, as he naturally feared that the sudden popularity of the new favourite might affect that of the old one; but his annoyance was much increased when he was informed that the proprietors were anxious that on the night of Bradbury’s benefit, they should both play in the same pantomime. He yielded his consent with a very ill grace, and with the conviction that it would end in his entire loss of favour with the audience. When the proposition was made to Bradbury in his presence, it was easy to see that he liked it as little as himself: which was natural enough. It was

on the following Saturday; Bradbury sustaining the part of the Clown for the first three scenes in the pantomime, then Grimaldi taking it for the next three scenes, and Bradbury coming in again to close the piece. Grimaldi was so much dissatisfied with these arrangements, that, on the morning of the day fixed, he told his friend Richard Lawrence (now or lately the Surrey treasurer) that he was certain it was "all up with him," and that Bradbury had thrown him completely out of favour with the public.

The result, however, was not what he anticipated. The moment he appeared, he was received with the most tremendous applause. Animated by this encouraging reception, he redoubled his exertions, and went through his three scenes amidst the loudest and most enthusiastic plaudits. This reception rather vexed and confused the other who had to follow, and who, striving to outdo his predecessor, made such a complete failure, that, although it was his own benefit, and he might reasonably be supposed to have a good many friends in the house, he was actually hissed, and ran off the stage in great disorder. Grimaldi finished the pantomime for him, and the brilliant manner in which it went off sufficiently testified to him that all the fears and doubts to which he had previously given way were utterly groundless. Indeed, when the performances were over, Bradbury frankly admitted that he was the best Clown he had ever seen, and that, if he had been aware of his abilities, he would not have suffered himself to be put in competition with him on any account whatever.

This Bradbury was a clever actor in his way, and a very good Clown, but of so different a character from Grimaldi, that it was hardly fair to either, to attempt instituting a comparison between

equally surprising. To enable himself to go through these performances without danger, he always occupied a very long time in dressing for the part, and adjusting no fewer than nine strong pads about his person, in such a manner as to protect those parts of his frame which were the most liable to injury;—wearing one on the head, one round the shoulders, one round the hips, two on the elbows, two on the knees, and two on the heels of his shoes. Thus armed, he would proceed to throw and knock himself about in a manner which, to those unacquainted with his precautions, appeared to indicate an intense anxiety to meet with some severe, if not fatal accident. Grimaldi, on the contrary, never wore any padding in his life; nor did he attempt any of the great exploits which distinguished Bradbury. His Clown was of a much more composed and subdued temperament, although much more comical and amusing, as is sufficiently shown by the result of the comparison between the two which has just been described. Bradbury was very original withal, and copied no one; for he had struck out a peculiar line for himself, and never departed from it.

After the night at Sadler's Wells, Grimaldi heard nothing more of Bradbury for some time; but at length received a note from him, dated, to his excessive surprise, from a private mad-house at Hoxton, requesting him to visit him there without delay, as he was exceedingly anxious to see him. He was much astonished at this request, as little or no intimacy had previously existed between them, and the place where the letter was dated was so very unexpected and startling. Not knowing what to do, he showed the letter to his friend Lawrence, who recommended him by all means to go, and volunteered to accompany him.

shaved off, and his person being kept under strict restraint. Concluding that he had a maniac to deal with, Grimaldi spoke in a very gentle, quiet manner, which the patient observing, burst into a roar of laughter.

“My dear fellow,” said Bradbury, “don’t look and speak to me in that way!—for though you find me here, treated as a patient, and with my head shaved, I am no more mad than you are.”

Grimaldi rather doubted this assurance, knowing it to be a common one with insane people, and therefore kept at a respectful distance. He was not long in discovering, however, that what Bradbury said was perfectly true. The circumstances which had led to his confinement in the lunatic asylum were briefly these :

Bradbury was a very dashing person, keeping a tandem, and associating with many gentlemen and men of title. Upon one occasion, when he had been playing at Plymouth, a man-of-war was coming round from that town to Portsmouth, on board of which he had several friends among the officers, who took him on board with them. It was agreed that they should sup together at Portsmouth. A splendid meal having been prepared, they spent the night, or at least the larger portion of it, in great hilarity. As morning approached, Bradbury rose to retire, and then, with considerable surprise, discovered that a magnificent gold snuff-box, with a gold chain attached, which he was accustomed to wear in his*¹ fob, and which he had placed on the table for the use of his friends, had disappeared. He mentioned the circumstance, and a strict search was immediately instituted, but with no other effect than that of proving that the valuable box was gone. When every possible conjec-

table almost immediately after supper:—it was suggested that he might have taken it in jest, for the purpose of alarming its owner.

Bradbury and several others went to this gentleman's room, and communicated to him the loss, and their doubts respecting him. The young gentleman positively denied any knowledge of the box, and, after bitterly reproaching them for their suspicions, abruptly closed the door in their faces, leaving Bradbury in a state of violent mortification at his loss.

On the following morning, nothing more having been heard of the missing property, the gentleman, against whom Bradbury now nourished many serious misgivings, sent down word to his friends, that he was so much vexed with them for their conduct of the night before, in supposing it possible he could have taken anything away even in jest, that he should not join them at breakfast, but, on the contrary, should immediately return to town. This message, instead of allaying, as it was doubtless intended to do, Bradbury's suspicions, caused him to think still worse of the matter; and upon ascertaining that the young man had actually taken a place in the next coach which started for London, he lost no time in obtaining a warrant, by virtue of which he took him prisoner just as he was stepping into the coach. Upon searching his portmanteau, the box was found, together with several articles belonging to his other companions. Bradbury was determined to prosecute, not considering the young gentleman's nobility any palliation of the theft: he was instantly taken before a magistrate, and fully committed for trial.

No sooner did this affair become known to the relatives and connexions of the offender, than, naturally anxious to preserve

whole of his life : he was not proof against this temptation, and at length signified his readiness to accept the bribe.

The next point to be considered was, how Bradbury could accept the money without compounding a felony, and increasing the obloquy already cast upon the thief. He hit upon and carried into execution a most singular plan:—he caused the report to be circulated that he had suddenly become insane—committed many extravagant acts—and in a short time was, apparently against his own will, but in reality by his own contrivance, deprived of his liberty, and conveyed to the asylum where Grimaldi visited him. The consequence of this step was, that when the stealer of the snuff-box was placed upon his trial, no prosecutor appearing, he was adjudged not guilty, and liberated accordingly. Intelligence of this was directly sent to Bradbury, who proceeded to make arrangements for his own release : this was soon effected, and it was on the eve of the day of his departure that Grimaldi saw him in the madhouse. His only object in writing, or rather, in causing the letter to be written, for he could not write a line himself, nor read either, was, to ask him to play for his ensuing benefit at the Surrey Theatre, which he readily consented to do ; then wishing him a speedy deliverance from his disagreeable abode, he took his departure.

The next day Bradbury came out of the asylum, telling everybody that he was perfectly recovered, having got well in as sudden a manner as he fell ill, and in the following week his benefit took place. Grimaldi played and sang for him, and took money at the gallery door, to boot. The house was quite full, and everything went on well until Bradbury made his appearance, when, impelled by some strange and sudden whim, he was

This was the ruin of Bradbury as a pantomimist. He did not appear again in London for many years, and, although he played occasionally in the country theatres, never afterwards regained his former rank and celebrity in the profession. As far as pecuniary matters were concerned, it did not matter much to him, the annuity affording him a handsome independence; but whether he afterwards sold it and dissipated the money, or whether the annuity itself was discontinued in the course of years, this at least is certain, that when he died, which he did in London, in 1828, he was in very indifferent circumstances, if not in actual want.

In October, Covent Garden commenced the new campaign, and brought forward "Mother Goose," which ran, with the same degree of success as before, until nearly Christmas, and was played altogether twenty-nine times.

On the 15th of this month, a most frightful accident occurred at Sadler's Wells. The pantomime was played first that night, which, joined to his having nothing to do at Covent Garden, enabled Grimaldi to go home early to bed. At midnight he was awakened by a great noise in the street, and loud and repeated knocks at the door of his house: at first he concluded it might be some idle party amusing themselves by knocking and running away; an intellectual amusement not at that time exclusively confined to a few gentlemen of high degree; but finding that it was repeated, and that the noise without increased, he hastily slipped on a morning-gown and trowsers, and hurried to the street-door.

The people who were clamouring outside, were for the most part friends, who exclaimed, when he appeared, that they had merely come to assure themselves of his personal safety, and

simultaneously to make their escape: that a violent rush towards the doors had ensued, and that in the confusion and fright a most fearful loss of life had taken place. He waited to hear no more, but instantly ran off to the theatre.

On arriving there, he found the crowd of people collected around it so dense, as to render approach by the usual path impossible. Filled with anxiety, and determined to ascertain the real state of the case, he ran round to the opposite bank of the New River, plunged in, swam across, and finding the parlour window open, and a light at the other end of the room, threw up the sash and jumped in *à la Harlequin*. What was his horror, on looking round, to discover that there lay stretched in the apartment no fewer than nine dead bodies! yes! there lay the remains of nine human beings, lifeless, and scarcely yet cold, whom a few hours back he had been himself exciting to shouts of laughter. Paralysed by the sad sight, he stood awhile without the power of motion; then, hurrying to the door, hastily sought to rid himself of the dreadful scene. It was locked without, and he vainly strove to open it, so knocked violently for assistance. At first the family of Mr. Hughes were greatly terrified at hearing these sounds issuing from a room tenanted, as they imagined, only by the dead; but at length recognising the voice, they unlocked the door, and he gladly emerged from the apartment.

It was not known until next day how many lives were lost; but when the actual loss of life could be ascertained, it appeared that twenty-three people, male and female, were killed, not to mention many dangerous and severe accidents. This melancholy catastrophe was mainly attributable to the imprudence of those persons who reached the theatre doors first, and who

them to make violent efforts to escape, for the most part fatal to the unfortunate persons who tried them. Several people flung themselves from the gallery into the pit, others rushed hopelessly into the densest part of the crowd and were suffocated, others were trodden under foot, and hence the melancholy result.

This accident happening on the last night but four of the season, it was deemed prudent not to re-open the house that year.* Such performers as were entitled to benefits, and had not yet taken them, took them at the Circus; and thus terminated the season of 1807,—the most melancholy termination of a season which Sadler's Wells Theatre had ever known.

On the 26th of December, was produced "Harlequin in his Element; or, Fire, Water, Earth, and Air," in which Bologna and Grimaldi were the harlequin and clown. It was highly successful, and in Grimaldi's opinion deservedly so, for he always considered it one of the best pantomimes in which he ever played. During this season, he also performed in an unsuccessful melo-drama, entitled "Bonifacio and Bridgetino,"†

* The house closed, but re-opened for two nights on Monday, November 2, and Tuesday, November 3. The whole proceeds were given to the relations of the deceased, and to the maimed sufferers on that luckless night, the 15th of the preceding month. The entire company engaged in the theatre tendered their services gratuitously: the two nights' representations produced 290*l.* 7*s.*, which was beneficially and impartially distributed by the proprietors, a proceeding which elicited the following declaration:—

"We, the magistrates, who have acted on this occasion, feel it incumbent upon us to express to the public our approbation of the conduct of the proprietors of Sadler's Wells, who used, as it appears, every possible exertion at the time, and have shown every attention to alleviate, as much as was in their power, the distress occasioned by so melancholy an event; and at the same time we feel a pleasure in bearing our testimonies to the grateful deportment of those who have experienced the attention, the humanity, and the liberal relief which has been afforded them.

and also Baptiste, in "Raymond and Agnes," which latter piece went off very well, and was repeated several times.

At this time he had a cottage at Finchley,* to which place he used to drive down in his gig after the performances. If there were no rehearsal, he remained there until the following afternoon; if there were, he returned to town immediately after breakfast. His principal reason for taking the house originally, was that his young son, of whom he was extremely fond, might have the benefit of country air: but both he and his wife became so much attached to it, that when his original term expired he renewed the lease, and retained it altogether for several years.

He met with numerous little adventures during these night-drives after the theatre: sometimes he fell asleep as soon as he had turned out of town, and only awoke when he arrived at his own gate. One night he was so fatigued with his performance that he still continued to sleep, when the horse, a very steady one, who could always find his way home without assistance, had stopped at the gate. The best of it was, that upon this particular night, the man-servant, who always sat up for him, had fallen asleep too; so there sat he slumbering on one side of the fence, while on the other side, not six feet off, sat his master in the gig, fast asleep too; and so they both remained, until the violent snorting of the horse, which probably thought it high time to turn in for the night, awoke the man, who roused the master, and speedily set all to rights. But as one circumstance which occurred to him during these night journeys will be narrated at greater length in another part of the volume, we will leave the subject for the present.

He very grievously offended Mr. Fawcett, in March, 1808, from

only two miles distant from Grimaldi's, and asked Grimaldi to play for his benefit, then close at hand: this he most willingly promised to do.

"Ah," said Fawcett, "but understand I don't want you to play clown or anything of that sort: I want you to do Brocket in the 'Son-in-Law.'"

Grimaldi demurred a little to this proposition, considering that as he had made a great hit in one branch of his profession, he could not do better than retain his standing in it, without attempting some new line in which, by failure, he might injure his reputation. Not wishing to disoblige Mr. Fawcett if he could possibly help it, he replied that he must decline giving an answer at that moment, but that in the course of a day or two he would write. Having consulted his friends in the mean time, and being strongly advised by them not to appear in the character Mr. Fawcett had mentioned, he wrote, declining in respectful terms to do so, and stating the grounds of his objection. Odd as it may appear, the little circumstance angered him much: he never afterwards behaved towards him with any cordiality, and for the three years immediately following, never so much as spoke to or noticed him whenever they chanced to meet.

On the 14th, he received permission from Mr. Kemble to play for his sister-in-law's benefit at the Birmingham theatre, which was then under the management of Mr. Macready, the father of the great tragedian. Immediately upon his arrival, Grimaldi repaired to his hotel, and was welcomed by Mr. Macready with much cordiality and politeness, proposing that he should remain in Birmingham two, or, if possible, three nights after the benefit at which he was announced to perform, and offering terms of



George Brutsman

to come. Finding that if the existing arrangements were adhered to, he could not be wanted for at least a week, he had resolved to accept any good offer that might be made to him at Birmingham, and therefore closed with Mr. Macready, without hesitation. After breakfast they walked together to the theatre to rehearse; and here Grimaldi discovered a great lack of those adjuncts of stage effect technically known as "properties:" there were no tricks, nor indeed was there anything requisite for pantomimic business. After vainly endeavouring to devise some means by which the requisite articles could be dispensed with, he mentioned his embarrassment to the manager.

"What! properties?" exclaimed that gentleman: "wonderful! you London stars require a hundred things, where we country people are content with one: however, whatever you want you shall have.—Here, Will, go down to the market and buy a small pig, a goose, and two ducks. Mr. Grimaldi wants some properties, and must have them."

The man grinned, took the money, and went away. After some reflection Grimaldi decided in his own mind that the manager's directions had been couched in some peculiar phrases common to the theatre, and at once went about arranging six pantomime scenes, with which the evening's entertainments were to conclude. While he was thus engaged, a violent uproar and loud shouts of laughter hailed the return of the messenger, who, having fulfilled his commission to the very letter, presented him with a small pig, a goose, and two ducks, all alive, and furthermore, with Mr. Macready's compliments, and he deeply regretted to say that those were all the properties in the house.

He accepted them with many thanks, and arranged a little busi-

He dressed himself in an old livery coat with immense pockets, and a huge cocked hat ; both were, of course, over his clown's costume. At his back, he carried a basket laden with carrots and turnips ; stuffed a duck into each pocket, leaving their heads hanging out ; carried the pig under one arm, and the goose under the other. Thus fitted and attired, he presented himself to the audience, and was received with roars of laughter. His songs were all encored—"Tippitywitchit" three times, and the hit was most decided. The house was full to the ceiling, and it was equally full on the following night, when he played Scaramouch ; the third night was as good as any of the preceding ; and the fourth, which terminated his engagement, was as successful as the rest. Just as he was going on the stage on this last evening, and had even taken up his "properties" for that purpose, a note was put into his hands, which was dated that morning, and had just arrived from London, whence it had been despatched with all possible speed. He opened it hastily, and read, in the hand of an intimate friend,

"DEAR JOE,—They have announced you to play to-morrow night at Covent Garden ; and as they know you have not returned from Birmingham, I fear it is done to injure you. Lose not a moment, but start immediately on the receipt of this."

He instantly ran to Mr. Macready, and showing him the letter, told him, that, although he was very sorry to disappoint his Birmingham friends, he could not stop to play.

"Not stop to play !" echoed the manager : "why, my good fellow, they will pull the house down. You must stop to play, and next run to London after me. I'll take care that a chair

He played with the same success to a brilliant house, received 294*l.* from the manager as his remuneration for three nights, threw himself into the chaise, and at twelve o'clock, within a few minutes after he had quitted the stage, was on his road to London.

The weather was tempestuous, the roads in a most desperate condition, and, to make matters worse, he treated the postboys so liberally in the hope of accelerating their speed, that they became so drunk as to be scarcely able to sit their horses. After various escapes and perils, they discovered, at the end of an unusually long stage, that they had come fourteen miles out of the road, "all in consequence," as one of the boys said, with many hiccups, and much drunken gravity,—“all in consequence of only taking one wrong turn.”

The result of this combination of mischances was, that he did not reach Salt Hill until seven o'clock on the following evening; having been nineteen hours on the road. Here he jumped into another chaise which fortunately stood ready at the door, and hurried up to London, without venturing to stay for any refreshment whatever. He drove straight to the theatre, where he found his friend awaiting his arrival with great trepidation. Hearing that the overture to the piece in which he was to perform was then playing, he gave his friend the 294*l.* to take care of, ran to his dressing-room, dressed for his part, which Farley had already made preparations for performing himself, and went on the stage the moment he got his cue, much to the astonishment of his friends, and greatly to the surprise of some individuals connected with the management of the theatre, who had anticipated a very different result from his visit to Birmingham.

CHAPTER XV.

1808 TO 1809.

Covent Garden Theatre destroyed by fire—Grimaldi makes a trip to Manchester: he meets with an accident there, and another at Liverpool—The Sir Hugh Middleton Tavern at Sadler's Wells, and a description of some of its frequenters, necessary to a full understanding of the succeeding chapter.

OF course some unforeseen circumstance was to happen, and some unexpected demand to be made on the money so easily earned. A short time before he went to Birmingham, being short of cash, he had commissioned a friend on whom he placed great reliance to get his bill at one month for 150*l.* discounted. The friend put the bill into his pocket-book, and promised to bring the money at night. Night came, but the money did not: it had not arrived when he returned from Birmingham; the friend was nowhere to be found, and he had soon afterwards the satisfaction of paying the whole sum, without having received a sixpence of the money.

During the season of 1808, at Sadler's Wells, the principal and most successful part he had was in a burletta, called "Odd Fish; or, Mrs. Scaite in the Seraglio." His two benefits were bumpers,* and the theatre closed on the 26th of September, after another most profitable campaign.

* Grimaldi's two benefits at Sadler's Wells, were special favours granted to him by his father-in-law, Mr. Hughes; but the burletta of "Odd Fish; or, Mrs.

The Covent Garden season which had terminated on the 13th of July,* recommenced on the 12th of September. Seven days afterwards the theatre was burned to the ground, after the performance of "Pizarro," and the "Portrait of Cervantes." The company removed to the Italian Opera-house, and subsequently to the Haymarket; but as Grimaldi was not wanted, he availed himself of an offer to visit the Manchester theatre, then managed by Messrs. Ward, Lewis, and Knight, and left town for that purpose. There was a strong rivalry between the coach proprietors on the road at that time, but for the safety of the passengers, it was expressly understood between them, that the coaches should never be allowed to pass each other, but that the coach which took the lead at starting should retain it all the way through, unless any temporary stoppage of the first vehicle enabled the second to assume the post of honour. Grimaldi's coach was the last, and just as they were going into Macclesfield, the Defiance, (which was the name of the other coach,) stopping to change horses and to allow the passengers to take tea, became entangled with the wheels of the second vehicle in the darkness of the evening; and when the second coach overset, which it did

November the first, concluded with a grand Aquatic Romance, called the "Magic Minstrel;" in this piece Grimaldi played Mulock; and Darnsit, afterwards of Covent Garden, the part of Oberon, the Magic Minstrel. In the pantomime of "Harlequin's Lottery," in which Mrs. Cawse, (who died in 1845,) personated Fortune, the chief scenes had reference to Bish's far-famed lottery offices.

* The season of 1807-8, at Covent Garden, closed June 27th, 1808, not the 13th of July. That of 1808-9, began September 12th, and on Monday 19th were performed "Pizarro," and the "Portrait of Cervantes." About four o'clock on the following morning, flames were seen to issue from the roof, alarm was given, but too late; in two hours more, the whole theatre, all the adjacent buildings in Fleet street and Bow street were a pile of smouldering ruins. The fire was

immediately, the empty Defiance fell upon the top of it so neatly and dexterously, that the passengers were obliged to be dragged through the two coaches before they could be extricated. Fortunately nobody was much hurt, although Grimaldi was the worst off, for he was the undermost, and five stout men (they carried six inside at that time) fell on the top of him. The only disagreeable part of the matter was, that they were delayed upwards of four hours, and that the unfortunate Defiance was left both literally and figuratively *on* the road for a much longer time.

During this provincial trip, he played six nights at Manchester and one at Liverpool, for which he received in all 251*l*. The only drawback upon the expedition was, that he sustained two accidents, the effects of which were quite bad enough, but might have been much more serious. He arranged and got up a very pretty little pantomime called "Castles in the Air," in which he of course played Clown. His first appearance was to be from a large bowl, placed in the centre of the stage, and labelled "Gooseberry Fool;"* to pass through which, it was necessary for him to ascend from beneath the stage, through a trap-door which the bowl concealed. On the first night of the piece he ascended from below at the proper time; but when he gained the level of the stage, the ropes which were attached to the trap broke, and he fell back into the cellar, from which he had just risen. He was terribly shaken and stunned by the fall, but quickly recovering himself, he ascended the stairs, went on the stage, and played as though nothing had happened to discompose him. In spite of his assumed calmness, however, he was in agony during the whole of the first scene; but the pain wholly left him as he went on, in the excitement of the part;

This was at Manchester. The Liverpool Theatre belonging to the same managers, and being resorted to by the same company, they all travelled thither for one night, for the purpose of playing "Castles in the Air," as the afterpiece, having the same master-carpenter with them as they had at Manchester. Grimaldi sought the man out, and explaining to him the nature of the accident which had happened through his negligence on the previous night, entreated him to render all secure for that evening, and to prevent a repetition of the occurrence. This he promised, but failed to do notwithstanding, for a precisely similar accident took place here. Grimaldi had ascended to the stage, and got his head through the bowl, when, as a shout of laughter and welcome broke from the audience, the ropes gave way, and he was left struggling in the trap. For a second or two he did not fall; for, having passed through the trap nearly to his waist, he strove to support himself by his arms. All his endeavours, however, were vain; the weight of his body pulled him downwards, and the trap being small his elbows were caught by the edges, and forced together above his head, thereby straining his shoulders to such an extent that he thought his arms were wrested from their sockets. He fell a considerable distance, and when he rose from the ground, was in excessive pain. He managed with great difficulty to crawl through the first scene, and then warming with his exertions and kindling with the great applause he received, he rallied successfully, and got through the part with flying colours.

When he reached his inn, which, now that the excitement of acting was over, was a task of considerable difficulty, he was well rubbed with the infallible embrocation, and put to bed in a very helpless state. On the following morning, scarcely able to

Garden company, till after Christmas, when "Mother Goose" was revived, with a new last scene, representing the ruins of Covent Garden Theatre, transformed by a touch of Harlequin's wand into a new and splendid building. In March he sustained for the first time the character of Kanko in "La Perouse." He took his benefit on the 23rd of May.* The season terminated a few nights afterwards; and with it, it may be incidentally observed, terminated the theatrical career of the celebrated Lewis, who retired from the stage at this period.

Sadler's Wells presented no particular novelty in 1809.† Its chief production was a piece called "Johnnie Armstrong," in which Grimaldi played Kirstie, a kind of "Touchstone:" it was very successful, and the season closed, as all the Sadler's Wells seasons did at that time, with great profits.

Before adverting to the little adventure arising out of one of the nocturnal rides to which reference has been already made, it will be necessary to mention a few circumstances, upon which such interest as it possesses mainly depends.

December 26, 1808. "La Perouse" was revived, "for the first time these four years," on Thursday, January 26, 1809, and not in March, as here stated. La Perouse was performed by Bologna, junior; Madame Perouse, by Miss Bristow; Umba, by Miss Adams; Kanko, suitor to Umba, by Mr. Grimaldi; their first appearance in those characters. The eighteenth representation was on April 5th.

* On Joe's benefit night was performed the "Busy Body;" Marplot, by Mr. Lewis; and "Mother Goose." Mr. Lewis took his final leave of the stage, on the 29th, as the Copper Captain, in "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife;" "The Ghost;" and "Valentine and Orson." The season terminated on May 31st with the "Exile," and "Valentine and Orson."

† Sadler's Wells opened at Easter, April 3, 1809, and in the pantomime of "Fashion's Fool; or, The Aquatic Harlequin," Grimaldi played Clown, and sang the songs of "Odd Fish," and the "Whip Club." On Whit Monday, May 22, he played the Wild Man, in the Aquatic Melo-Dramatic Romance of "The Wild Man: or, Water Pageant." On July 31, a new Harlequinade, called

The pantomime was usually played first, at Sadler's Wells. When this was the case Grimaldi was at liberty by about half-past eight : he would sometimes call at the Sir Hugh Myddleton, and take a glass of wine and water with some friends who frequented the house, and then start off in his gig to Finchley.

He had several times met at this tavern a young man of the name of George Hamilton, a working jeweller, residing somewhere in Clerkenwell, a sociable good-tempered merry fellow enough, but rather too much addicted to drinking and squandering his money. This man was very sensitive upon the subject of trade, being, as the phrase goes, above his business, having an ambition to be a gentleman, and resenting any allusion to his occupation as a personal affront. He was a very ingenious and skilful man at his business, and could earn a great deal of money; but his companions suspected that these absurdities led him into spending more than he could well afford. Grimaldi was so strongly impressed with this opinion, that, with a good-hearted impulse, he frequently felt tempted to remonstrate with him upon his folly. Their slight intimacy, however, restrained him, and the man continued to take his own course.

These were his mental peculiarities : he had a remarkable physical peculiarity besides, wanting, either from an accident or a natural defect, the third finger of his left hand. Whether he wished to conceal this imperfection, or had some other defect in the same hand, is uncertain ; but he invariably kept his little finger in a bent position beneath the palm of it ; so that when he sat, or walked, as he usually did, with his left hand half hidden in his pocket, the defect was not observable ; but when he suddenly changed his position, or drew forth his hand in discourse, it had always the appearance of having only two fingers

lost sight of him, in consequence of his engagements taking him elsewhere ; but in Easter 1809, when Sadler's Wells re-opened, and Grimaldi resumed his habit of calling at the tavern for half an hour or so, before driving out to Finchley, he again encountered him. He had been married in the interval, and frequently took his wife, a pretty young creature, to the tavern with him, as at that time many tradesmen in the neighbourhood were accustomed to do.

Grimaldi paid little attention to these circumstances at first ; but a change had come over the man which irresistibly attracted his attention. He had become very violent and irritable,—had acquired a nervous restlessness of manner, an occasional incoherence of speech, a wildness of look, and betrayed many other indications of a mind somewhat disordered. He dressed differently too : formerly he had been neatly attired, and looked like a respectable, well-doing man ; but now he was showy and gaudy, wore a number of large rings and other articles of cheap jewellery, and his desire to be thought a great man had increased greatly,—so much so, indeed, that his declamations against trade and all concerned in it, deeply affronted the worthies who were wont to assemble at the Sir Hugh, and occasioned many disputes and altercations.

All these things evidently made the wife very unhappy. Although he usually abstained from drinking to his customary excess in her presence, he said and did enough to make her wretched, and frequently, when she thought she was unobserved, she would sit in a remote corner and weep bitterly.

One night, Hamilton brought with him a new friend, a man of very sinister appearance and marvellously ill-favoured countenance. They were, or affected to be, both greatly intoxicated.

The two men came together very often. Nobody knew who or what the stranger was ; nobody liked or even spoke to him ; and it was constantly observed that whenever Hamilton was in a state of gross intoxication, he was in this person's company. The old visitors of the Sir Hugh shook their heads mysteriously, and hoped he had not fallen into bad company ; although, truth to tell, they could not help thinking that appearances were greatly against him.

One night Grimaldi was sitting alone in the room, reading the newspaper, when Hamilton, the stranger, and the poor wife came in together. The former was in a state of intoxication, so much so that he could scarcely stand. The wife had evidently been crying, and seemed truly wretched ; but the strange man wore an air of dogged triumph that made him look perfectly hideous.

Curious to see what passed, Grimaldi held the paper before his face, and watched them closely. They did not recognise him, but walked to the other end of the room. Hamilton hic-coughed forth an order for something to drink, stammering in reply to the earnest entreaties of his wife, that he would go home directly he had taken "this one glass more." It was brought, but not tasted, for his head had fallen upon the table, and he was fast asleep before the liquor came.

The man whom he had a minute before named for the first time—Archer he called him—regarded his sleeping companion in silence for some minutes, and then leaning behind him to reach the wife, who was on the other side, touched her lightly on the shoulder. She looked up, and he, pointing with a contemptuous air to the sleeping drunkard, took her hand and pressed it in a manner which it was impossible to misunderstand.

Two days after his great benefit, Grimaldi travelled over to Preston, to fulfil his engagement with Mr. Howard, the manager, but was very much dispirited by the number of Quakers whom he saw walking about the streets, and whose presence in such numbers caused him to entertain great doubts of the success of this trip. The manager, however, was more sanguine, and, as it afterwards appeared, with good reason. He played Acres and Scaramouch to full houses, the receipts on the first night being 84*l.*, and on the second 87*l.* 16*s.* His share of the joint receipts was 86*l.*, with which sum, as it far exceeded his expectations, he was well contented.

On the second day after Grimaldi's arrival in Preston, a little circumstance occurred, which amused him so much, that he intended to have introduced it in one of his pantomime scenes, although he never did so. He was walking along the street by the market-place, when, observing a barber's pole projecting over the pavement, and recollecting that he wanted shaving, he opened the shop-door, from above which hung the pole, and looking into the shop, saw a pretty little girl, about sixteen years of age, who was sitting at needlework. She rose to receive him, and he inquired if the master was within.

"No, sir," said the girl; "but I expect him directly."

"Very good," replied Grimaldi: "I want to look about me a little; I'll call again."

After strolling through the market-place a little while, he called again, but the barber had not come home. Grimaldi was walking down the street after this second unsuccessful call, when he encountered Mr. Howard, the manager, with whom he fell into conversation, and they walked up and down the street talking together. As he was going to the theatre, and wished



George Cruikshank

“That’s very provoking,” said Grimaldi, “considering that I have called here three times already.”

The girl agreed that it was, and, stepping to the door, looked anxiously up the street and down the street, but there was no barber in sight.

“Do you want to see him on any particular business?” inquired Howard.

“Bless my heart! no, not I,” said Grimaldi: “I only want to be shaved.”

“Shaved, sir!” cried the girl. “Oh, dear me! what a pity it is you did not say so before! for I do most of the shaving for father when he’s at home, and all when he’s out.”

“To be sure she does,” said Howard; “I have been shaved by her fifty times.”

“You have!” said Grimaldi. “Oh, I’m sure I have no objection. I am quite ready, my dear.”

Grimaldi sat himself down in a chair, and the girl commenced the task in a very business-like manner, Grimaldi feeling an irresistible tendency to laugh at the oddity of the operation, but smothering it by dint of great efforts while the girl was shaving his chin. At length, when she got to his upper lip, and took his nose between her fingers with a piece of brown paper, he could stand it no longer, but burst into a tremendous roar of laughter, and made a face at Howard, which the girl no sooner saw than she dropped the razor and laughed immoderately also; whereat Howard began to laugh too, which only set Grimaldi laughing more; when just at this moment in came the barber, who, seeing three people in convulsions of mirth, one of them with a soapy face and a gigantic mouth making the most extravagant faces over a white towel, threw himself into

ever seen," and entreating him to "stop them faces, or he knew he should die." When they were all perfectly exhausted, the barber finished what his daughter had begun; and rewarding the girl with a shilling, Grimaldi and the manager took their leaves.

Having settled at the theatre, received his money, and made several purchases in the town, (for he always spent a per-centage in every place where he had been successful,) Grimaldi returned to Liverpool on the 24th of August.

CHAPTER XX.

1817.

More provincial success—Bologna and his economy—Comparative dearness of Welsh Rare-bits and Partridges—Remarkably odd modes of saving money.

HAVING no engagement at Liverpool,—indeed, having no time to accept one,—Grimaldi remained there only two days, at the expiration of which time he went to Hereford, and having waited on Mr. Crisp, the manager, went to look at the theatre, which, to his great astonishment and concern, he found to be nothing more than a common square room, with a stage four yards wide and about as many high, the head of the statue in *Don Juan* being obscured by the flies, and thus rendered wholly invisible to the audience. What made this circumstance the more annoying, was, that on the statue being seen to nod its head depended the effect of one of the very best scenes of *Scaramouch*.

As Grimaldi did not hesitate to express his great mortification and annoyance, and his decided indisposition to act in such a place for four nights, which was the term originally proposed, a fresh arrangement was entered into, by which he engaged to play two nights at Hereford, and two at Worcester, where he had then seen a better theatre. At the former town the

Having now concluded his provincial engagements, Grimaldi repaired to Cheltenham for rest and relaxation, and remained there until the second week in September, when he returned to London. While at Cheltenham, he stumbled upon his old friend, Richer, the rope-dancer, already mentioned as having been engaged at Sadler's Wells, at an early period of Grimaldi's career. He had retired from the profession, and was married to the widow of a clergyman who had died extremely rich. They were living in great style, and to all appearance very happy.

The following account of Grimaldi's gains during this short excursion will afford some idea of the immense sums he was in the habit of receiving about this time. The amount was so much more than he had supposed, that on going over the calculation, he could scarcely believe he was correct. It was as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Brighton, four nights	100	0	0
Birmingham, six	210	0	0
Worcester, one	50	0	0
Glasgow and Edinburgh, nine	417	0	
Berwick, two	102	7	0
Liverpool, sixteen	324	14	0
Preston, two	86	0	0
Hereford, two	43	10	0
Worcester, (2nd visit) two	90	8	0
Total	£1423	19	0

The accounts which he received at Sadler's Wells on his return were unusually bad. They were fully corroborated by Mr. Hughes, who informed him it had been the very worst season the theatre had ever known.

Birmingham, by which he cleared 150*l*. From Birmingham he went to Leicester, where Elliston also had a theatre, and where he played for two nights, being accompanied by Mr. Brunton, who was Elliston's stage-manager. They were very successful, Grimaldi's share of the receipts being 70*l*.

The morning after his last performance here, Grimaldi took a post-chaise and started for Chester, where he had undertaken to act for one week. As the chaise drove up to the White Lion, the London coach drove up too, and, seated on the outside, he saw, to his great surprise, his old friend Old Bologna, who, it appeared, had been engaged expressly to perform with him in "Mother Goose." The unexpected meeting afforded great pleasure to both, and having ordered a private sitting room and a good dinner, they sat down together and fell into conversation; in the course of which Bologna, by various hints and other slight remarks, gave his friend to understand that his old characteristic of never being able, without a strong effort, to make up his mind to spend a penny was by no means impaired by time. The room was handsomely fitted up; and the dinner, which was speedily placed before them, consisted of a great variety of expensive delicacies, the sight of which awakened in Bologna's mind a great many misgivings concerning the bill, which were not at all lessened by the landlady's informing them, with a low curtsy, as she placed the first dish on the table, that she knew who they were, and that she would answer for their being provided with every luxury and comfort the house would afford. They were no sooner left alone, than Bologna, with a very dissatisfied air, informed his friend that he saw it would never do to stay in that house.

"Why not?" inquired Grimaldi.

you'll take my advice, you'll remain where you are : for I have found from experience, that if there is a choice between a first-rate and a second-rate house, one should always go to the former. There you have the best articles at a fair price ; while at the other you have bad things, worse served up, and enormously dear."

Bologna was ultimately prevailed upon not to leave the house, contenting himself with various economical resolutions, which he commenced putting in practice when the waiter appeared to know if they would order supper.

"Supper !" exclaimed Bologna ; "certainly not ; not on any account. Suppers are extremely unhealthy : I never take them by any chance."

"You may get some supper for *me*," said Grimaldi, "and have it ready at half-past eleven."

"What will you like to order, sir ?"

"I'll leave it to the landlady. Anything nice will do."

"Good Heaven ?" said Bologna, as the waiter went out of the room ; "what a bill you'll have to pay here !"

They strolled about the town ; arranged with the manager to commence next night with "Mother Goose," and having beguiled the time till supper, repaired to the inn, where a fine brace of partridges, done to a turn, were placed before Grimaldi, which his companion eyed with very hungry looks, congratulating himself aloud, however, upon having saved himself that expense, at all events.

There was a silence for some minutes, broken only by the clatter of the knives and forks ; and then Bologna, who had been walking up and down the room in a restless manner, stopped short, and inquired if the birds were nice ?

and Bologna, after long consideration, hesitatingly ordered a Welsh rare-bit.

"Certainly, sir," said the man; and by the time Grimaldi had finished his supper, the Welsh rare-bit appeared.

"Stop a minute, waiter," said Bologna. "Grimaldi, do you mean to take supper every night?"

"Certainly. Every night."

"Well, then, waiter, remember to bring me a Welsh rare-bit every evening when Mr. Grimaldi takes his supper. I don't want it; but it has so rude an appearance to sit looking on while another man is eating, that I must do it as a matter of form and comfort. You'll not forget?"

"I'll be sure to remember, sir," was the reply.

The moment he was gone, Grimaldi burst into a great roar of laughter, which his friend took in high dudgeon, muttering various observations regarding extravagance, which were responded to by divers remarks relative to shabbiness. Neither of them gave way, and the supper arrangement was regularly acted upon; Grimaldi always having some warm dish of game or poultry, and Bologna solacing himself with a Welsh rare-bit, and the reflection of having saved money while his companion spent it. They stayed at Chester nine days in all, and when the bills were brought at last, found, as Grimaldi had anticipated, that the charges were moderate, and well merited by the manner in which they had been accommodated.

"Well, Bologna," said Grimaldi, with a triumphant air, "are you satisfied?"

"Pretty well," he replied. "I must acknowledge that the bills are not so heavy as I feared they would have been; but there is one terrible mistake in mine. Look here! they have

had better ring for the waiter : I have no doubt he can explain the matter."

The bell was rung, and the waiter came.

"Oh ! here's a mistake, waiter," said Bologna, handing him the bill. "You have charged me for supper every night here, and you'll remember I only had a Welsh rare-bit. Just get it altered, will you?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the waiter, glancing from the bill to the customer ; "it's quite right, sir."

"Quite right?"

"Quite, sir : it's the rule of the house, sir—the rule of every house on the road—to charge in that way. Half-a-crown for supper, sir ; cold beef, fowl, game, or bread and cheese : always half-a-crown, sir. There were a great many other dishes that you might have had ; but you recollect giving a particular order for a Welsh rare-bit, sir ?"

The saving man said not another word, but paid the nine half-crowns for the nine Welsh rare-bits, to his own great wrath and his friend's unspeakable amusement.

The next morning they returned to London, and on the road Grimaldi had another instance of his companion's parsimony, which determined him never to travel in his company again. When the coach came to the door, he was perfectly amazed to find that the economical Harlequin was going to travel outside, but not surprised to hear him whisper, when he expressed his astonishment, that he should save a pound by it, or more.

"Yes," answered Grimaldi, "and catch a cold by sitting outside all night, after your exertions at the theatre, which will

tained that there's one place vacant inside, and that the coach belongs to our landlady. Now, I mean to remind her what a deal of money we have spent in the house; to tell her that I shall be soon coming here again; and to put it to her, whether she wont let me ride at least a part of the way inside."

Grimaldi was not a little offended and vexed by this communication, feeling that, as they had been stopping at the house as companions and friends, he was rather involved in the shabbiness of his fellow-traveller. His angry remonstrances, however, produced not the slightest effect. Bologna acted precisely as he had threatened, and received permission from the good lady of the house, who was evidently much surprised at the application, to occupy the vacant inside place; it being stipulated and understood on both sides, that if anywhere on the road a passenger were found requiring an inside place, Bologna should either give up his, or pay the regular fare on to London.

As Grimaldi could not prevent this arrangement, he was compelled to listen to it with a good grace. The manager, who came to see them off, brought 100*l.* for Grimaldi, all in three-shilling pieces, packed up in a large brown-paper parcel; and this part of the luggage being stowed in the coach-pocket, away they went, Bologna congratulating himself on his diplomacy, and Grimaldi consoling himself with the reflection that he should know how to avoid him in future, and that he was now, at least, safe from any further exhibition of his parsimony during the journey. The former resolution he kept, but in the latter conclusion he was desperately wrong.

It was evening when they started, and at four o'clock in the morning, when they stopped to change horses, a customer for

having been roused, had the matter explained to him once more; upon which he sat bolt upright in the coach, and repeating all the man had said, inquired with great distinctness whether he understood it to be put to him, that he must either pay the inside fare, or get out.

"That's it, sir," said the coachman.

"Very well," said Bologna, without the slightest alteration of tone or manner; "then I shall do neither the one nor the other."

The coachman, falling back a space or two from the door, and recovering from a brief trance of astonishment, addressed the passengers, the would-be passenger, the ostlers and stable-boys, who were standing around, upon the mean and shabby conduct of the individual inside. Upon this, the passengers remonstrated, the would-be passenger stormed, the coachman and guard bellowed, the ostlers hooted, the stable-boys grinned, Grimaldi worked himself into a state of intense vexation, and the cause of all the tumult sat quite immovable.

"Now, I'll tell you what it is," said the coachman, when his eloquence was quite exhausted, "one word's as good as a thousand. Will you get out?"

"No, I will not," answered the sleepy Harlequin.

"Very well," said the man; "then off goes my benjamin, and out you come like a sack of saw-dust."

As the man was of that portly form and stout build which is the badge of all his tribe, and as, stimulated by the approving murmurs of the lookers-on, he began suiting the action to the word without delay, Bologna thought it best to come to terms; so turned out into the cold air, and took his seat on the coach-top, amidst several expressions of very undisguised contempt from his fellow-passengers.

the guard and coachman something beyond their usual fee, as an intelligible hint that he was not of the same caste as his companion.

Two or three days afterwards, meeting Bologna in the street, he inquired how he had got on at the coach-office.

“Oh, very well,” said Bologna; “they abused me finely.”

“Just what I expected.”

“Yes, and very glad I was of it, too.”

“What do you mean?”

“Saved my money, Joe; that’s what I mean. If they had been civil, of course I must have given something, not only to the coachman, but the guard besides; but as they were not civil, of course I did not give either of them a penny, and so saved something handsome by it.”

Bologna had many good qualities, and he and Grimaldi always remained on good terms; but as he was not upon the whole the most entertaining travelling companion that could be found, they never afterwards encountered each other in that capacity.

CHAPTER XXI.

1817 to 1818.

Grimaldi becomes a Proprietor of Sadler's Wells.—Newcastle Salmon, and Coal Mine.—Production of Baron Munchausen.—Anecdote of Ellar the Harlequin, showing how he jumped through the Moon, and put his hand out.—Gold Snuff-box, Sir Godfrey Webster, and the Duke of York.

GRIMALDI need not have hastened back to town with so much expedition, for he was not in request at Covent Garden, as it turned out, until November, and then only for a night or two in "La Perouse." Still, as it was uncertain whether he might not be wanted at a few days' notice, he was fearful of accepting any provincial engagement of more than a week's duration.

Sadler's Wells was closed when he reached London, after a season which had entailed a very severe loss on the proprietors; the balance against whom was so heavy, as to cause it to be rumoured that one more such season would throw a few of the shares into new hands, which in reality shortly afterwards occurred. In a pecuniary point of view, it was an extremely fortunate thing for Grimaldi that he had remained absent from Sadler's Wells during the summer of 1817, his gains in the provinces being considerably more than they would have been if he had remained in town; while, on the other hand, the degree of exertion he had to encounter in the provinces was

Chester 100*l.*, making a clear gain of 1743*l.* 19*s.* for fifty-six nights' performance; whereas, if he had remained at Sadler's Wells, he would have merely received his thirty weeks' salary at 12*l.* each, and two benefits of 150*l.* each, making a total of 660*l.* for one hundred and eighty nights' performance. He was therefore a gainer not only in the saving of bodily exertion, but in the sum of 1073*l.* 19*s.*, by his fortunate and unlooked-for expulsion from Sadler's Wells.

In February, 1818, Grimaldi received several intimations that if he chose to make application to the proprietors of Sadler's Wells, he might return almost upon his own terms; but he declined doing so, partly from feeling rather annoyed at the manner in which he had been treated, and partly from discovering how well provincial excursions answered in a pecuniary point of view, and how much more conducive they were to his health than remaining in town. Nevertheless, when Mrs. Hughes, the widow of his friend, waited upon him and entreated him herself to return, he scarcely knew how to refuse, and at last told her that if he returned at all to that establishment, it must be as a part proprietor. He said this, thinking that it would either release him from any further requests to go back to Sadler's Wells, or enable him to share in the profits which had been for many years accruing to the proprietors. But in this idea, as in many others, he was totally mistaken. After some little preliminaries, in the shape of meetings, discussions, waiving of objections, &c., the proposal was accepted, and he became the purchaser of a certain number of shares in Sadler's Wells from Mrs. Hughes herself.* This being arranged, Gri-

* Joe's desire was to become a proprietor, and an eighth share, at his request,

leave town about the end of July, for six weeks in each year, to fulfil provincial engagements.

The Covent Garden season terminated on the 17th of July, and his benefit at Sadler's Wells, which occurred two nights afterwards, being over, (the receipts were 243*l.* 19*s.*.) he left town to fulfil the engagements he had entered into with country managers. He went first to Liverpool, where he acted from the 27th July until the 19th of August: his profits amounted to 327*l.*, being two pounds and a few shillings more than the result of his previous visit. Thence he went to Lancaster, the theatre of which town, like the one at Berwick, he found up a stable-yard, but very neat and commodious. Here he played two nights, for which he received 111*l.* 16*s.* From this town he went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he performed five nights, realizing 243*l.* 14*s.* as his share of the profits.

During his stay at Newcastle, he recollected that the best pickled salmon sold in London was called by that name, and came from thence, and he resolved to have a feast of it, naturally concluding that he should procure it in high perfection in the place whence it was brought for sale. Accordingly, one evening he ordered some to be got ready for supper upon his return from the theatre; which the waiter of the hotel he was staying at promised should be done, but in so curious a manner that he could not help fancying he did not understand his meaning. He therefore asked him if he had heard what he said.

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" was the reply: "I'll take care it shall be ready, sir."

even then the deficit required from Grimaldi, by reason of his eighth share, was little more than ninety pounds; and in that instance Joe experienced the kindness of the family to which his early marriage had attached him. The loss

This appeared to settle the point, and as soon as the play was over, he returned to the inn, anticipating how much better the salmon would be than the London pickle. The cloth was duly spread, and a covered dish placed before him.

"Supper, sir—quite ready, sir," said the waiter, whisking away the cover, and presenting to his sight a mutton cutlet. "You'll find this excellent, sir."

"No doubt; but I ordered pickled salmon!"

"I beg your pardon, sir,—did you, sir?" (with a slight appearance of confusion.)

"Did I! Yes, to be sure I did. Do you mean to say you do not recollect it?"

"I may have forgotten it, sir; I suppose I *have* forgotten it, sir."

"Well, it does not matter much; I can make a supper of this. But don't forget to let me have some pickled salmon to-morrow evening."

"Certainly not, sir," was the waiter's answer; and so the matter ended for that night.

On the following evening, Grimaldi invited the manager, at the close of the performances, to go home and sup with him, which he willingly did. As on the preceding evening, the meal was prepared and awaiting their arrival. Down they sat, and upon the removal of the cover, a rump-steak presented itself. A good deal surprised, he said to the waiter,

"What's this! have you forgotten the pickled salmon again?"

"Why, really, sir, dear me!" hesitated the man,—“I believe I have—I really fancied you said you would have beef to-night, sir. To-morrow night, sir, I'll take care that you have some.”

"Now, mind that you *do* remember it, for to-morrow is the

it was no great matter, and they took their hot supper very comfortably.

There was a crowded audience next night, which was Grimaldi's benefit and the last of his performance. He played Acres and Clown, received the cash, bade farewell to the manager, and hurried to his inn, greatly fatigued by his performance, and looking forward with much pleasure to the pickled salmon.

"All right to-night, waiter?" he inquired.

"*All* right to-night, sir," said the waiter, rubbing his hands.

"Supper is quite ready, sir."

"Good! Let me have my bill to-night, because I start early in the morning."

Grimaldi turned to the supper-table: there was a dish, with a cover; the waiter removed it with a flourish, and presented to his astonished eyes—not the long-expected pickled salmon, but a veal-cutlet. These repeated disappointments were rather too much, so he pulled the bell with great vehemence and called for the landlord.

The landlord came, and Grimaldi having stated his grievance, he appeared to understand as little about the matter as his waiter; but at length, after many explanations, Grimaldi learned to his great surprise, that pickled salmon was an article unknown in Newcastle, all Newcastle pickled salmon being sent to London for sale. The brilliant waiter not having the remotest conception of what was wanted, and determined not to confess his ignorance, had resolved to try all the dishes in the most general request until he came to the right one.

Grimaldi saw a coal mine on this expedition, his curiosity having been roused by the manager's glowing description. We should rather say that he went down into one, for his survey

"Hollo!" exclaimed Grimaldi, greatly terrified. "What's that?"

"Hech!" said the guide, "it's only a wee bit of cool fallen doon: we ha'e that twa or three times a day."

"Have you?" replied Grimaldi, running back to the shaft. "Then I'll thank you to ring for my basket, or call out for it, for I'll stop here no longer."

The basket was lowered, and he ascended to the light without delay, having no wish whatever to take his chance again among the "wee bits of cool."

While upon this last expedition, he received a letter from Mr. Harris, in which that gentleman informed him that it would be necessary for him to be in London by the 7th of September, to attend the opening of Covent Garden; in consequence of which he was obliged to forego his Edinburgh engagement with Mr. Murray, which annoyed him greatly, for he had calculated upon clearing pretty nigh five hundred pounds by that portion of his trip; besides, being at Newcastle, he was within one day's journey of Edinburgh. However, he was obliged to attend to the summons, and so returned to London, where a few days afterwards he encountered Mr. Harris, with whom he had the following vexatious colloquy.

"Ah, Joe!" he exclaimed, with evident surprise, "why, I did not expect to see you for three weeks to come!"

"You did not, sir!" exclaimed Grimaldi, with at least an equal degree of astonishment.

"Certainly not; I thought you were going into Scotland."

"So I was; but I received a letter from you, recalling me to town by to-day; which summons I have obeyed, by sacrificing my Edinburgh excursion, and with it about five hundred

"That was unfortunate; for I changed my mind after writing that letter, and wrote again on the following day, giving you permission to stay away until the first week of October. Never mind; as you *are* here, we'll find you something to do;—we'll try 'Mother Goose' for a night or two next week."

To this obliging promise he made no reply, not deriving the smallest degree of comfort from it. Mr. Harris, observing that his offer had failed in producing the intended effect, added, "And as to the loss of your Edinburgh engagement, that I must endeavour to make up to you in some way or other at a future time."

He thanked him for this kindness, and Mr. Harris did not forget his promise.

The result of Grimaldi's first season's proprietorship was far from propitious. At first all went on very well; but after he had left (as previously stipulated) in July, the houses fell to nothing, and when he arrived in town again in September, he was informed that there would be a clear loss instead of any profit. This both surprised and vexed him; for Sadler's Wells had always been considered a very good property, and he had fully expected that he should, merely upon becoming a proprietor, have to receive a sum of money yearly, in addition to his regular salary.

The first proprietors' meeting which he attended, occurred a few days after the close of the season; and then all the books and papers connected with the business of the theatre being produced, it was found that a heavy loss was really attendant upon the year's campaign.

"And pray what may be the amount?" he inquired, rather

"Oh, come!" cried Grimaldi, "it's not so bad as I thought, —333*l.* 13*s.* is not so much among six persons!" which was the number of proprietors at that time.

"Joe," said Mr. Hughes, gravely, "is this the first meeting you have attended?"

"Yes."

"Ah, then I do not wonder you have misunderstood me. What I meant was, that the loss to each person is 333*l.* 13*s.*, the gross loss being six times that sum."

This communication was a very unexpected blow to all his hopes; but as there was nothing better to be done, he paid his share of the money at once with as good a grace as he could assume, having thus gratified his wish to become a proprietor of Sadler's Wells by the expenditure, first, of a large sum of money for his shares, and secondly, of another sum of upwards of 330*l.* at the end of the first season.

Grimaldi anticipated other heavy demands upon his provincial gains of 1817 and 1818, and bitterly regretted having connected himself with the establishment in any other way than as a salaried actor.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was entitled "Baron Munchausen,"* and proved as successful as its predecessors had done for some years. During its run, a circumstance occurred worthy of mention, as an instance of the brutality of a man belonging to the theatre.

One night, a fellow engaged as a carpenter, and whose business it likewise was to assist in holding a carpet in which the pantomime characters are caught when they jump through the scenes, went to Ellar, who was the Harlequin, and holding up the carpet, said that it was very dry, thereby intimating in the

some cause or other, either because he had already fee'd the men liberally, or was engaged at the moment in conversation, returned some slight answer, unaccompanied by the required gratuity, and the fellow went away grumbling. On the following evening, Ellar was informed that the man had been heard to talk about being revenged upon him : he only laughed at the threat, however, and all went on as usual until the third night afterwards, when, as he and Grimaldi were on the stage together, in the scene where he used to jump through the "moon," and after the former had given the cue for him to take the leap, he was surprised to observe that he hesitated, and still more so when, drawing close to him, he said, in a whisper, "I am afraid they don't mean to catch me. I have knocked three times against the scene, and asked if they were ready ; but nobody has said a word in reply."

"It's impossible," whispered Grimaldi : "I don't believe there is a man in the theatre who would dream of such a thing. Jump, man, jump."

Ellar still paused, and Grimaldi fancying that symptoms of impatience were beginning to appear among the audience, told him so, and again urged him not to stop the business of the scene, but to jump at once.

"Well, well," cried Ellar, "here goes!—but Heaven knows how it will end!" And in a complete state of uncertainty whether any men were there to catch him, or he was left to break his neck, he went through the scene. His fears were not without good ground ; for the fellows whose business it was to hold the carpet were holding it, as they well knew, in a position where he could never reach it, and down he fell. Suspecting his danger while in the very act of going through the panel, he

through the part, and the audience were quite ignorant of the occurrence.

The circumstance was not long in reaching the ears of Mr. Harris and Mr. Fawcett, who were made acquainted not only with Ellar's accident, but with the man's threat, and the occasion which had given rise to it. Fawcett immediately caused all the carpenters to assemble on the stage, and told them that if Mr. Ellar would undertake to say he believed the accident had been brought about wilfully, they should every one be discharged on the spot. Ellar being sent for, and informed that this was the proprietor's deliberate intention, replied without hesitation, that he could not believe it was intentional, and whispered to Grimaldi as he left the house, that the fellow had got a wife and half-a-dozen children dependent upon him.

This praiseworthy resolution, which prevented several men from being thrown out of employment, was rendered the more praiseworthy by Ellar's having no earthly doubt that the mistake was intentional, and by his knowing perfectly well that if he had fallen on his head in lieu of his hand, he would most probably have been killed on the spot.

While upon the subject of stage accidents, we may remark, that very few of these mischances befel Grimaldi, considering the risks to which a pantomime actor is exposed, and the serious injuries he is constantly encountering. The hazards were not so great in Grimaldi's case as they would have been to any other man similarly situated, inasmuch as his clown was a very quiet personage, so far as the use or abuse of his limbs was concerned, and by no means addicted to those violent contortions of body, which are painful alike to actor and spectator. His clown was an embodied conception of his own, whose

endeavour to imitate him in this respect, they would be more at ease themselves, and place their audiences more at ease also.

While playing in "Baron Munchausen" at Covent Garden, one evening very shortly after Ellar's accident, he observed his Royal Highness the Duke of York, accompanied by Sir Godfrey Webster and another gentleman, sitting in his Royal Highness's private box, and laughing very heartily at the piece. Upon his coming off the stage about the middle of the pantomime, he found Sir Godfrey waiting for him.

"Hard work, Grimaldi!"

"Hard and hot, Sir Godfrey!"

"Have a pinch of snuff, Grimaldi," said Sir Godfrey: "it will refresh you." With this he produced from behind him, where he had been holding it, the largest snuff-box Grimaldi had ever beheld. The sight of it amused him much. Sir Godfrey laughed and said, "Take it to that gentleman," pointing to the pantaloon, who was on the stage, "and see if he would like a pinch."

Grimaldi willingly complied, and having shortly afterwards to enact a foppish scene, swaggered about the stage, ostentatiously displaying this huge box, which from its enormous size really looked like a caricature made expressly for the purpose, and offered a pinch to the pantaloon with all that affectation of politeness in which he was so ludicrous. The audience laughed at its gigantic size, and the pantaloon, looking suspiciously at him, demanded,

"Where did you get this box?"

To this, affecting modest reserve and diffidence, he made no answer, but turned away his head.

"You've stolen it!" continued Pantaloon.

This the injured Clown strongly denied upon his honour, with

In answer to this, he pointed significantly to the box whither Sir Godfrey had retired, and the merriment which this occasioned was great indeed. The Duke, to whom, as he discovered afterwards, the box belonged, was convulsed with laughter; nor were the gentlemen with him less merry, while the audience, either suspecting that some joke was afloat, or being amused at the scene, joined in the hearty laughter emanating from the royal box.

"Where are you going to take the box?" asked Pantaloon, as he turned to go off.

"Where it has often been before," cried Grimaldi, pointing upwards: "to my uncle's!" And so saying, he ran off the stage amid a fresh burst of merriment.

Sir Godfrey was with him in two minutes. Whether he thought the box was really in danger of being so disposed of, is uncertain, but he popped round behind the scenes as quickly as possible.

"Capital, Grimaldi!" he cried, still laughing; "you have won me a wager—so ought to go snacks in it;" and he slipped five guineas into his hand.

"So, so," said the Duke of York, who, unperceived by Grimaldi, had followed his friend; "this is the way stakes are divided, eh?—I'll tell you what, Sir Godfrey, although Mr. Grimaldi is not a porter, I entertain no doubt that he would carry your box for you every evening upon such terms as these."

Having vented this joke, his Royal Highness returned to his box. As he was not often behind the scenes at the theatre, this was, with one exception, the only time Grimaldi encountered him.

CHAPTER XXII.

1818 to 1823.

Profit and Loss.—Appearance of his Son at Covent Garden.—His last engagement at Sadler's Wells.—Accommodation of the Giants in the Dublin Pavilion.—Alarming state of his health.—His engagement at the Coburg.—The liberality of Mr. Harris.—Rapid decay of Grimaldi's constitution, his great sufferings, and last performance at Covent Garden.—He visits Cheltenham and Birmingham with great success.—Colonel Berkeley, Mr. Charles Kemble, and Mr. Bunn.

By his six weeks' excursion in 1818, Grimaldi cleared 682*l.* 12*s.*; but the disastrous result of the Sadler's Wells season, and the expenditure of ready money in the purchase of his shares, swallowed up nearly the whole of his gains in the provinces—so that notwithstanding his great success and the enormous sums he had so recently acquired, the autumn of 1818 found him still poor, and entirely dependent on his salary for support. He looked forward, however, to the next season at Sadler's Wells, in the hope that some success might repay a portion of the money he had already lost.

The opening of Sadler's Wells* was attended by many

* Sadler's Wells opened on Easter Monday, April 12, 1819, with a pantomime, the scenes selected from successful harlequinades at that theatre, commencing with the opening from that of the "Talking Bird;" Clown, Mr. Grimaldi, with a new song, "HOT COBLINS," composed by Mr. Whitaker; Columbine, Miss Tree, from the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. On April 19, the "Great Devil" was revived; Nicola, Mr. Grimaldi; the Lady Matilda, Miss Tree: and on Whit

commentment of the season, Mr. Charles Dibdin suddenly relinquished his post of acting stage-manager, and was with great difficulty prevailed upon to make the necessary arrangements for the first week. As he left the theatre at Whitsuntide, and nobody could be found to supply his place, Grimaldi was obliged to fill it himself, and to relinquish, though with great unwillingness, his summer excursion, with all its advantages. He produced a new pantomime of his own invention, called "The Fates," which ran the whole of the season, and drew very good houses. The result was, that when the books were made up at the end of the season, each of the proprietors had something to receive; which was a very agreeable improvement on the untoward prospects with which the preceding year had opened.

Gradually, but surely, during the whole of this year Grimaldi felt his health sinking, and heavy and painful infirmities creeping upon him. He learnt, when it was too late, that if at this time he had retired from the profession, and devoted one or two years to relaxation and quiet, his constitution would in all probability have rallied, and he would have been enabled to resume his usual occupations, with every hope of being long able to perform them, instead of being compelled, as he eventually was,

Munchausen," "Gulliver," and "Whittington." Ellar was the Harlequin, and Grimaldi had to play at both theatres in the two pieces. The pantomime was played at Covent Garden on July 19th, the last night of the season, by the express desire of the Duke and Duchess of Kent. The pantomime of "Harlequin's Holiday" continued uninterruptedly till August 9th, when it was announced it would be withdrawn for a short time, to re-embellish the scenery, machinery, and dresses, and would then be re-produced with additional scenes. On August 2, Grimaldi sustained Friday in the burletta of the "Bold Buccaneers," which was successfully repeated during the season. The Duke and Duchess, pleased with Grimaldi's performance at Covent Garden, visited Sadler's Wells, on August 27th. On September 13th, Grimaldi played Scaramouch, in "Don

to quit the stage when he was little more than forty years old.

The Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden was "Harlequin Don Quixote," which was not quite so successful as the pantomimes at that house usually had been, although Grimaldi played Sancho Panza in the opening, and afterwards Clown. Its success was so equivocal, that another pantomime, called "Harlequin and Cinderella," was produced in April; but it had no greater success than its predecessor, for it went off but indifferently, and did not run long. Having a few nights to spare in March, he accepted a theatrical invitation from Lynn in Norfolk, where he acted four nights and received one hundred and sixty pounds.

At Sadler's Wells a new system had been acted upon. The authorities being greatly puzzled in the choice of a stage-manager, and having received an offer from Mr. Howard Payne to take the theatre for one season at a certain rental, agreed to let it. Mr. Howard Payne commenced his campaign at Easter,*

* Sadler's Wells opened under the management of Mr. Howard Payne on Easter Monday, April 3, 1820, with the best playing company ever assembled within its walls. The stage business was arranged by Grimaldi; and in the first piece, the pantomime of "Goody Two Shoes," Bologna played Harlequin; Grimaldi, Clown; Barnes, Pantaloon; Farmer, with a song, Mr. Wood, the husband of Miss Paton, afterwards Lady Lennox; Columbine, Miss Vallancey. On Whit Monday, May 22, was produced a splendid Persian Pantomime, entitled "The Yellow Dwarf; or, Harlequin King of the Golden Mines;" Harlequin, Mr. Bologna; Columbine, Miss Vallancey; Pantaloon, Mr. Barnes; Grim, afterwards Clown, with a song, "London Cheats, or there never was such Times," by Grimaldi: the Yellow Dwarf, afterwards Yellow Harlequin, Mr. Guerint; Ubrino, his attendant Genie, afterwards Yellow Clown, Mr. Grimaldi, Junior, his first appearance this season. On July 3, was revived the pantomime of "Don Juan;" Don Juan, Mr. Bologna; Scaramouch, Mr. Grimaldi, with the song of "Tippitywitchet;" Donna Anna, Miss Vallancey. Grimaldi's benefit, Thursday,

sum of money, as did the proprietors also, and Grimaldi not unnaturally began to be weary of the speculation. As both his benefits, however, were bumpers, he left the theatre in good spirits in the month of September,* to fulfil an engagement at Dublin, little dreaming at the time, that with the exception of his farewell night, he was destined never again to act upon the Sadler's Wells stage.

Grimaldi's travelling companions were Ellar and his son, all three being engaged by Mr. Harris to act at his theatre in Dublin, and receiving permission to absent themselves from Covent Garden for that express purpose. Since his last journey to the Irish capital in 1805, roads and coaches had improved, and steam-packets had supplied the place of the old sailing-boats, so that they reached their destination in half the time which the same journey had occupied before.

The theatre in which they were to act was called the Pavilion, and had formerly been an assembly-room. It was perfectly round, and very ill adapted for dramatic representations; the stage room, too, was so inconvenient, and they were so pressed for want of space, that when "Harlequin Gulliver" was in preparation, they were at a loss where to put the Brobdingnagians. These figures were so very cumbersome and so much in the way,

* On Howard Payne's night, October 5th, after T. Dibdin's melodrama of "Douglas," followed a harlequinade, compiled by Grimaldi from the best scenes of the last popular pantomimes, entitled "Scraps; or, Fun for the Gallery." Bologna, Guerint, Grimaldi, Young Grimaldi, Barnes, and Miss Vallancey performed the parts; and the bills stated that, on this occasion, Mr. Grimaldi would appear for the last time this season, and introduce one of his most celebrated comic songs, and with Mr. Bologna a grotesque dance, the Pas-de-Deux from "Mother Goose." C. M. Westmacott, who was scene-painter and composer of the pantomimes this season at Sadler's Wells, had also a benefit on October 11th, the bills for which invitingly asked the reader, "Will you come for nothing?" the prices of admission were as usual; but to every person in the boxes and pit

that the men who sustained the parts were at last obliged to be dressed and put away in an obscure corner before the curtain was raised, whence they were brought forward when wanted upon the stage, and into which they were obliged to retreat when they had no more to do, and to remain there as quietly as they could, until the pantomime was over, there being actually no room to get them out of their cases. The dresses and makings-up were very cumbrous and inconvenient; but as no other mode of proceeding presented itself, the unfortunate giants were obliged to make the best of a bad bargain, and to remain in a great state of perspiration and fatigue until they could be reduced to the level of ordinary men. Grimaldi pitied the poor fellows so much, that after the first night's performance was over, he thought right to represent to them that no relief could be afforded, and to ask whether they could make up their minds to endure so much labour for the future.

"Well, then," said the spokesman of the party, "we have talked it over together, and we have agreed to do it every night, if your honour—long life to you!—will only promise to do one thing for us; and that is, just to let us have a leetle noggin of whisky after the green rag comes down."

This moderate request was readily complied with, and the giants behaved themselves exceedingly well, and never got drunk.

The party stayed seven weeks at Dublin. Grimaldi made a great deal of money by the trip, and realized by his benefit alone, two hundred pounds.

Between September, 1820, when Covent Garden re-opened, and Christmas, when the new pantomime was brought forward, Grimaldi frequently appeared as Kasrac in "Aladdin;" nor did



and afterwards the Lover, (a character which has now become obsolete,) and bade fair to become a great public favourite.

Sadler's Wells was let at Easter, 1821, for the ensuing three seasons, to Mr. Egerton, well known to the public as a performer at Covent Garden. He and Grimaldi had been very good friends for many years; but some clauses being introduced into his agreement for hiring the theatre which Grimaldi as a proprietor so strongly disapproved that he refused to affix his signature to the document, a coolness took place between them which was never afterwards removed. Notwithstanding this difference, he always continued to entertain a high respect for Egerton, who was greatly liked by his friends and the profession generally, and who had been at one period of his career a much better actor than the play-goers of the present day remember him. This gentleman was afterwards connected with Mr. Abbott in the management of the Victoria Theatre, in which speculation they both sustained considerable losses. Both are since dead.

On the 23rd of April, Farley produced his melodrama of "Undine; or, the Spirit of the Waters," in which Grimaldi sustained a new character.†

* Young Joe made his first appearance at Covent Garden, as Chittaque, a little-footed Chinese Empress, with a big body, afterwards Clowny-chip, in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Fortunio," on December 26, 1815. Young Joe, as Adonis Fribble, in "Harlequin and Friar Bacon," was an admirable lover of the dandy kind; Ellar, Barnes, and Miss E. Dennett maintained the usual ascendancy of pantomime at this theatre; but the greatest merit characterised Grimaldi, whose Clown seemed to carry all before it. His parody on the dagger-scene in "Macbeth," and his duet with the oyster, elicited unequivocal plaudits. Most truly did Theodore Hook observe—"The Covent Garden pantomime is excellent. The strength of Grimaldi, the Garrick of Clowns, seems, like that of wine, to increase with age; his absurdities are admirable. There is a life and spirit about the whole arrangement of this species of entertainment here, which

In the autumn, Ellar, Grimaldi, and his son again repaired to Dublin, making a stay of five weeks at the Birmingham Theatre,* which was then in the hands of Mr. Bunn. Here they got up the pantomime of "Friar Bacon," which was played to excellent houses for twenty-four nights. Mr. Bunn behaved on this occasion, as Grimaldi states he did upon every other in which he was concerned, with great liberality, allowing him a salary of twenty pounds per week, and the son nine pounds per week, independent of half a clear benefit, the profits of which were great.†

At Dublin, "Friar Bacon" was played twenty-nine nights out of the thirty-two for which Grimaldi and his party were engaged, and the pieces were so successful, that it would have been the interest of all parties to prolong their engagements, if the arrangements at Covent Garden had admitted of their doing so. It was at this period that, with an agony of mind perfectly indescribable, Grimaldi found his health giving way by alarming degrees beneath the ravages of premature old age. On the

* During this stay at Birmingham, Grimaldi had his portrait painted by S. Raven, on a papier-maché box, circular in form and of large size. The resemblance was so satisfactory, that he had it copied, and brought away in all six boxes, which he presented to friends, not retaining one for himself. From the one in the possession of Mr. Richard Hughes, the annexed engraving was taken; and it may be regarded as an approved likeness by those who knew Joe intimately for many years.

† In another part of the data upon which these Memoirs are founded, Grimaldi has the following remarks concerning this gentleman, which, as he appears to have been anxious that they should obtain publicity, the Editor subjoins in his own words:—"A great deal has been said about, and indeed against, Mr. Bunn, since he has become a London manager; but I have had many opportunities of observing him and his mode of doing business, and I feel satisfied that he has most liberal notions, and would if it were in his power amply recompense according to their talents any *artiste* employed by him. I beg it may be understood that in this remark I do not allude in any way to myself; for, putting

notice, and to send immediately for medical aid. He was attended by one of the most eminent physicians in Dublin, and under his treatment recovered sufficiently to be enabled to resume his character in about a week. But he felt, although he could not bear to acknowledge it even to himself, that his restoration to health was only temporary, that his strength was rapidly failing him, that his limbs grew weaker, and his frame became more shaken every succeeding day, and that utter decrepitude, with its long train of miseries and privations, was coming upon him. His presentiments were but too fully realized, but the realization of his worst fears came upon him with a rapidity which even he, conscious as he was of all the symptoms, had never deemed possible.

The successful sojourn of the party at Dublin at length drew to a close, as it was necessary that they should return to London to be in readiness for the pantomime. On the 6th of December, 1821, they bade farewell to Ireland, and after a most boisterous voyage landed at Holyhead, whence they posted in haste to town, and the day after their arrival began the rehearsals for Christmas. In his ill state of health, Grimaldi was terribly shaken by the journey home and the sea-sickness, and felt worse in point of general health than he had yet done.

The pantomime was "The Yellow Dwarf."* Although the

* The pantomime at Covent Garden Theatre, on December 26, 1821, was entitled "Harlequin and Mother Bunch; or, The Yellow Dwarf." The characters were:—The King of the Gold Mines, afterwards Harlequin, Mr. Ellar; Guinea Pig, afterwards Harlequin's lacquey, Mr. J. S. Grimaldi; Yellow Dwarf, afterwards Clown, Mr. Grimaldi; the Princess Allfair, afterwards Columbine, Miss E. Dennett; and the Queen of Golconda, a lady with a ruby nose, afterwards Pantaloon, Mr. Barnes.

Grimaldi, for the benefit of Mr. T. Dibdin, at the Surrey Theatre, March 26, 1822, played his old part of Squire Bugle, in "Mother Goose," Ridgway being the Harlequin. On Easter Monday, April 8th, the melo-dramatic romance of

performers began to rehearse at an unusually late period, its success was perfect; but, notwithstanding it ran forty-four nights, Grimaldi never thought it a favourite with the public. He himself played the Yellow Dwarf, and his son played a part called "Guinea Pig." "Cherry and Fair Star" was revived at Easter, in consequence of its great success in the previous season, and answered the purpose extremely well.

During the whole of this summer Grimaldi's health gradually but steadily declined. Sometimes there were slight fluctuations for the better, in which he felt so much improved as to fancy that his strength was beginning to return; and although the next day's decay and lassitude showed but too clearly that they were but brief intervals of strength, he fondly regarded these red-letter days as tokens of a real and permanent change for the better. Perhaps even now, as he had nothing to do at Sadler's Wells, and was too unwell to accept country engagements, if he had remained quiet during the Covent Garden recess, lived with great regularity, and acted upon the best medical advice, he might have retained for many years longer some portion of his health and spirits. But Mr. Glossop, who was then the lessee of the Coburg Theatre (now the Victoria), made him an offer which he could not resist, and he acted there for six weeks,* at a considerable sum per week and a free

Grimaldi enacted *Topac*, the slave of the Greek Captain. This piece for splendour surpassed every other production at that theatre; the accompaniments were of the first description, and the looking-glass scene presented a gorgeous effect.

* Grimaldi's performances commenced at the Coburg, on Monday, July 1st, 1822, in a pantomime, comprising a selection of the most successful scenes from various harlequinades of the last fifteen years, called "*Salmagundi*; or, the Clown's Dish of all Sorts!" produced under Grimaldi's directions. The scenery

management, that he might have renewed it for the same space of time, if he had not become too ill to appear upon the stage.

At this crisis of his disorder Grimaldi was advised to try the Cheltenham waters. He went to Cheltenham in August, and being somewhat recovered by the change of air, consented to act for Farley and Abbott, who had taken the theatre on speculation, for twelve nights. He cleared 150*l.*; and whether this sum of money, or the waters, or the change of scene revived him is uncertain, but he felt greatly improved in health when he returned to London for the opening of Covent Garden, to commence what ultimately proved to be his last season at that theatre.

“Harlequin and the Ogress; or, the Sleeping Beauty,” was

July 15th, commenced the third week of Grimaldi's engagement, in a new pantomime called “Disputes in China; or, Harlequin and the Kong Merchants!” the scenery painted from views taken in China, by Stanfield. J. S. Grimaldi made his first appearance at the Coburg this evening. Joe and his son sustained the characters of the two clowns incidental to the piece. In the scene of the Whampoa river, Joe affected to astonish John China-man with his song of “Hot Codlins.” The bill of Monday, July 22, was underlined to the effect that, in consequence of the continuous and dangerous indisposition of Mr. Grimaldi, the pantomime was unavoidably postponed. Gilderoy, in the melodrama of that name, was this night played by Mr. J. H. Chapman, from the Surrey Theatre: it had been previously played by Henry Kemble, but the irregularities and drunkenness of this man were unpardonable: he was the instigator of young Joe's follies and misconduct; latterly they were inseparable, and which was the worst of the two was hard to be decided. Henry Kemble had been employed to supply Huntley's vacancy, caused by illness; but he could scarcely be retained a fortnight, and was dismissed.

On the 29th, Grimaldi was so far recovered that he resumed his part of Clown in the “Disputes in China.” The bills announced his re-appearance as “positively the last six nights of his performing;” and a further intimation, which was really a matter of fact:—“It is particularly recommended to those families who have not witnessed the *inimitable acting* of Mr. Grimaldi and his son, Mr. J. S. Grimaldi, that they should secure places as soon as possible, much disappointment having been experienced by parties coming late and finding the boxes filled from the overflowing of the pit.” Grimaldi sang on these last six nights

the pantomime of the season. The rehearsals went off very briskly, and the piece, when it was produced, met with the success which generally attended the production of pantomimes at that house. Nothing, indeed, could exceed the liberality displayed by Mr. Harris in getting up this species of entertainment; to which circumstance, in a great measure, the almost uniform success of the pantomimes may be attributed. This spirit was not confined to the stage and its appointments, but was also extended in an unusual degree to the actors. Every suggestion was readily listened to, and as readily acted upon, if it appeared at all reasonable: every article of dress was provided at the expense of the management; the principal actors were allowed a pint of wine each, every night the pantomime was played, and on the evening of its first representation they were invited to a handsome dinner at the Piazza Coffee-house, whither they all repaired directly the rehearsal was over. At these dinners Farley took the chair, while Brandon acted as vice; and there is no doubt that they materially contributed to the success of the pantomimes. There can be no better means of securing the hearty good-will and co-operation of the parties employed in undertakings of this or any other description than treating them in a spirit of generosity and courtesy.

In this pantomime Grimaldi played a part with the very pantomimic name of "Grimgribber;" and that sustained by his son was expressively described in the bills as "Whirligig." It ran until nearly the following Easter, when a new melodrama by Farley appeared, called "The Vision of the Sun; or, the Orphan of Peru."

In this piece, which came out on the 23rd of March, 1823, Grimaldi played a prominent character; but even during the

agonizing nature. Men were obliged to be kept waiting at the side-scenes, who caught him in their arms when he staggered from the stage, and supported him, while others chafed his limbs,—which was obliged to be incessantly done until he was called for the next scene, or he could not have appeared again. Every time he came off, his sinews were gathered up into huge knots by the cramps that followed his exertions, which could only be reduced by violent rubbing, and even that frequently failed to produce the desired effect. The spectators, who were convulsed with laughter while he was on the stage, little thought that while their applause was resounding through the house, he was suffering the most excruciating and horrible pains. But so it was until the twenty-fourth night of the piece, when he had no alternative, in consequence of his intense sufferings, but to throw up the part.

On the preceding night, although every possible remedy was tried, he could scarcely drag himself through the piece; and on this occasion it was only with the most extreme difficulty and by dint of extraordinary physical exertion and agony, that he could conclude the performance, when he was carried to his dressing-room exhausted and powerless.

Here, when his bodily anguish had in some measure subsided, he began to reflect seriously on his sad condition. And when he remembered how long this illness had been hovering about him, how gradually it had crept over his frame, and subdued his energies, with what obstinacy it had baffled the skill of the most eminent medical professors, and how utterly his powers had wasted away beneath it, he came to the painful conviction that his professional existence was over. Enduring from this terrible certainty a degree of anguish, to which all his bodily

with considerable success. The piece was performed forty-four nights during the season ; but although he afterwards rallied a little, he never attempted to resume the part. In spite of all his sufferings, which were great, and a settled foreboding that his course was run, it was some years before hope deserted him: and for a long time, from day to day he encouraged hopes of being at some future period able to resume the avocations in which he had spent his life.

Grimaldi repaired again, in the month of August, to Cheltenham, recollecting that it had had some beneficial effect on his health in the previous year. During his stay, he so far recovered as to be enabled to play a few nights at the theatre, then under the management of Mr. Farley. Here he encountered Mr. Bunn, who informed him that Mr. Charles Kemble was then starring at Birmingham, and that Colonel Berkeley having promised to play for his benefit, he had come over to Cheltenham to ascertain what part the Colonel would wish to play. Mr. Bunn added, that he was there as much for the purpose of seeing Grimaldi as with any other object, as he wanted him to put a little money into both their purses, by playing a few nights at Birmingham. Grimaldi declined at first, but being pressed, and tempted by Mr. Bunn's offer, consented to act for two nights only, the receipts, whatever they might happen to be, to be divided between them.

It was Mr. Charles Kemble's benefit night when he and his son arrived at Birmingham ; and as that gentleman was a great favourite there, as indeed he was everywhere throughout his brilliant career, Grimaldi entertained some fears that the circumstance would prove prejudicial to his interests. He sought a few moments' conversation with Mr. Kemble in the course of

and where he had experienced so much liberality, he was ready to accept an engagement there at six pounds per week, if agreeable to the proprietors.

"Joe," said Mr. Charles Kemble, "your offer is a very handsome one, and I agree to it at once. Your son is now engaged with us on the terms you have mentioned."

They shook hands and parted. Grimaldi strolled into the green-room, and there met Colonel Berkeley, who, after a short conversation, said that he very much wished to play Valentine to his Orson: to which Grimaldi replied, it would give him great pleasure to afford him the opportunity whenever he felt disposed.

"Very well," said Colonel Berkeley, "then we will consider the matter settled. As soon as you have done here, you must come to Cheltenham for one night. I will make all necessary arrangements with Farley: your son shall play the Green Knight, and I will give you one hundred pounds as a remuneration. We will try what we can do together, Joe, to amuse the people."

Grimaldi had not intended to act again after his Birmingham engagement, until the production of the Christmas pantomime at Covent Garden; but seeing that Colonel Berkeley was anxious to effect the arrangement, and feeling grateful for the liberality of his offer, he pledged himself without hesitation to accept his terms. The play was never done, however, by these three performers, for Grimaldi's theatrical career was over.

The night after Mr. Charles Kemble's benefit, Grimaldi produced a little pantomime of his own, called "Puck and the Puddings." The hit was so complete, and the sensation he excited so great, that he felt infinitely better than he had done

night, Mr. Bunn presented him with 186*l.* 12*s.* as his share of the profits, accompanied with many wishes for his speedy and perfect restoration to health, which Grimaldi himself, judging from his unwonted spirit and vigour, cheerfully hoped might be yet in store for him.

These hopes were never to be realized : the enthusiastic reception he had met with—unusually enthusiastic even for him,—had roused him for a brief period, and called forth all his former energies only to hasten their final prostration. With the exception of his two farewell benefits, this was his last appearance, his final exit from the boards he had trodden from a child, the last occasion of his calling forth those peals of merriment and approbation which, cheerfully as they sounded to him, had been surely ringing his death-knell for many years.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1823 to 1827.

His great afflictions augmented by the dissipation and recklessness of his Son—
He is compelled to retire from Covent Garden Theatre, and is succeeded by
him—New Speculation at Sadler's Wells—Changes in the System of Manage-
ment, and their results—Sir James Scarlett and a blushing Witness.

FROM the period at which we have now arrived, down to within a year or so of his death, Grimaldi experienced little or nothing but one constant succession of afflictions and calamities, the pressure of which nearly bowed him to the earth; afflictions which it is painful to contemplate, and a detailed account of which would be neither instructive nor entertaining. A tale of unmitigated suffering, even when that suffering be mental, possesses but few attractions for the reader; but when, as in this case, a large portion of it is physical, it loses even the few attractions which the former would possess, and grows absolutely distasteful. Bearing these circumstances in mind, we shall follow Grimaldi's example in this particular, and study in the remaining pages of his life to touch as lightly as we can upon the heavy catalogue of his calamities, and to lay no unnecessary stress upon this cheerless portion of his existence.

Grimaldi slept at Birmingham the night after his closing performance, and on the following morning returned to Cheltenham, where he was attacked by a severe and alarming illness,

attached to his person, who was his only child, for whom he had always entertained the most anxious solicitude, whom he had educated at a great expense, and upon whom a considerable portion of the earnings of his best days had been most liberally bestowed. Up to this time he had well repaid all the care and solicitude of his parents: he had risen gradually in the estimation of the public, had increased every year in prosperity, and still remained at home his father's friend and companion. It is matter of pretty general notoriety that the young man ran a reckless and vicious course, and in time so shocked and disgusted even those who were merely brought into contact with him at the theatre for a few hours in a night, that it was found impossible to continue his engagements.

The first notification his father received of his folly and extravagance was during their stay at Cheltenham, when one morning, shortly after he had risen from his sick-bed, he was waited upon by one of the town authorities, who informed him that his son was then locked up for some drunken freaks committed overnight. He instantly paid everything that was demanded, and procured his release; but in some skirmish with the constables he had received a severe blow on the head from a staff, which, crushing his hat, alighted on the skull and inflicted a desperate wound. It is supposed that this unfortunate event disordered his intellects, as from that time, instead of the kind and affectionate son he had previously been, he became a wild and furious savage; he was frequently attacked with dreadful fits of epilepsy, and continually committed actions which nothing but madness could prompt. In 1828, he had a decided attack of insanity, and was confined in a strait-waistcoat in his father's house for some time. As no disorder of mind had appeared in him before, and as his miserable

They returned to London together, and for the next three months Grimaldi consulted the most eminent medical men in the hope of recovering some portion of his lost health and strength. During that time he suffered an intensity of anxiety which it is difficult to conceive, as their final decision upon the remotest probability of his recovery was postponed from day to day. All their efforts were in vain, however. Towards the end of October, he received a final intimation that it was useless for him to nourish any hope of recovering the use of his limbs, and that although nature, assisted by great care on his part and the watchfulness of his medical attendants, might certainly alleviate some of his severe pains, his final recovery was next to impossible, and he must make up his mind to relinquish every thought of resuming the exercise of his profession.

Among the gentlemen to whose kindness and attention he was greatly indebted in this stage of his trials, were, Sir Astley Cooper, Sir Matthew Tierney, Mr. Abernethy, Dr. Farr, Dr. Temple, Dr. Uwins, Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Thomas and Mr. James Wilson. To all these gentlemen he was personally unknown; but they all attended him gratuitously, and earnestly requested him to apply to them without reserve upon every occasion when it was at all likely that they could be of the slightest assistance.

It was with no slight despair that Grimaldi received the announcement that for the rest of his days he was a cripple, possibly the constant inmate of a sick room, and that he had not even a distant prospect of resuming the occupations to which he had been attached from his cradle, and from which he was enabled up to this time to realize an annual income of fifteen hundred pounds: and all this without any private

calamity, and fell into a state of extreme mental distress, from which it was a long time before he was thoroughly roused. As soon as he could begin to exercise his reason, he recollected that it was a duty he owed his employers to inform them of his inability to retain his situation at Covent Garden, the more especially as it was time they made some arrangements for the ensuing Christmas pantomime. Accordingly he sent a note to the theatre, acquainting them with his melancholy condition, and the impossibility of his fulfilling his articles, (which had only been entered into in the preceding January, and were for three years,) and recommending them to engage without loss of time some other individual to supply his place.

The communication was received with much kindness, and many good wishes for his recovery. After several interviews and much consideration, it was resolved that his son, J. S. Grimaldi, should be brought out as principal Clown in the ensuing Christmas pantomime. He appeared, for the first time* in that character, in the pantomime of "Harlequin and Poor Robin, or the House that Jack built;" and his success was complete. His father sat in the front of the house on his first night, and was no less gratified by his reception in public, than by the congratulations which poured upon him when he went round to the stage and found everybody delighted with the result of the trial. The pantomime proved very successful; it had an extended run, and the proprietors of the theatre, highly satisfied with the young man's success, with much liberality cancelled his existing articles, which were for 6*l.* per week, and entered into a new agreement by which they raised his salary to 8*l.* To Grimaldi, also, they behaved in a most handsome manner; for although his regular salary was, as a

tion and kindness on their part, and a far greater token of their recollection of his services than he had ever expected to receive.

The three years for which Egerton had taken Sadler's Wells having now expired, he was requested by the proprietors to state what views he entertained as to retaining or giving up the property. It being found impossible to comply with his terms, and a Mr. Williams,* who at that time had the Surrey, having made an offer for the theatre, they agreed to let it to him for one season. Soon after this agreement was entered into, Williams called upon Grimaldi one morning upon business, and in the course of the interview the latter inquired by what plan he proposed to make both theatres answer.

"Why, Mr. Grimaldi," replied Williams, "if two theatres could be kept open at the same expense as one, and the company equally—mind, I say *equally*—good, don't you think it very likely that the speculation would succeed?"

"Yes, I think it would," rejoined Grimaldi, doubtfully, for as yet he understood nothing of the manager's drift; "I think it would."

"And so do I," said the other; "and that's the way I mean to manage. I mean to work the two theatres with one and the same company: I mean to employ one-half the company in the earlier part of the evening at Sadler's Wells, and then to transfer them to the Surrey, to finish there;—at that theatre I shall do precisely the same: and I am now having carriages built expressly to convey them backwards and forwards."

This system, which has since been tried (without the carriages) at the two great houses, was actually put in practice. On Easter Monday, 1824, the carriages began to run, and the two

himself, and got greatly into debt with the proprietors; upon which, fearing to increase their losses, they took measures to recover possession of the theatre. When they obtained it, they were obliged to finish the season themselves; by which, as they had never contemplated such a proceeding, and had made no preparations for it, they sustained a very considerable loss.

The other occasion, referred to in a previous chapter, that Grimaldi had the honour of conversing with the Duke of York, was in 1824, when his Royal Highness took the chair at the Theatrical Fund dinner, and kindly inquiring after his health, of some one who sat near him, desired to see him. He was officiating as one of the stewards, but was of course surprised at the Duke's wish, and immediately presented himself. He received him with great kindness, and hearing from his own lips that his infirmities had compelled him to relinquish the exercise of his profession, said, he was extremely sorry to hear him say so, but heartily trusted, notwithstanding, that he might recover yet, for his loss would be a "national calamity." He added, when Grimaldi expressed his acknowledgments, "I remember your father well: he was a funny man, and taught me and some of my sisters to dance. If ever I can be of any service to you, Grimaldi, call upon me freely."

In this year Grimaldi was much troubled by pecuniary matters, and the conduct of his son. He was living on the few hundred pounds he had put by, selling out his stock, spending the proceeds, and consequently rising every morning a poorer man. His son, who had now a good salary and was rising in his profession, suddenly left his home, and, to the heart-rending grief of his father and mother, abandoned himself to every species of wild debauchery and riot. His father wrote to him, imploring

For four years Grimaldi never saw any more of his son, save occasionally on the stage of Sadler's Wells, where he was engaged at a salary of five pounds per week ; or when he met him in the street, when the son would cross over the road to get out of the way. Nor during all this time did he receive a single line from him, except in 1825. He had written to the young man, describing the situation to which he was reduced, and the poverty with which he was threatened, reminding him that between the two theatres he was now earning thirteen pounds per week, and requesting his assistance with some pecuniary aid. To this application he at first returned no reply ; but several of Grimaldi's friends having expressed a very strong opinion to him on the subject, he at length returned the following note :—

“DEAR FATHER,—At present I am in difficulties ; but as long as I have a shilling, you shall have half.”

This assurance looked well enough upon paper, but had no other merit ; for he never sent his father a farthing, nor did he again see him (save that he volunteered his services at two farewell benefits,) until he came to his door one night in 1828, and hardily claimed shelter and food.

In 1825 the proprietors of Sadler's Wells resolved to open the theatre on their joint account, with which view they secured the services of Mr. T. Dibdin as acting-manager. It was determined at a meeting of proprietors, that it would be advantageous to the property if one of their number were resident on the premises to assist Mr. Dibdin, and regulate the expenditure. As Grimaldi had nothing to do, it was proposed in the kindest manner by Mr. Jones,* one of the shareholders, that he

It need scarcely be said that he accepted this proposal with great gratitude. They commenced the season with much spirit, turning the old dwelling-house partly into wine-rooms according to the old fashion, and partly into a saloon, box-office, and passages. The dresses of the opening piece were of a gorgeous description, and every new play was got up with the same magnificence. They also determined to take half-price, which had never before been done at that house, and to play the twelve months through, instead of confining the season to six; this last resolution originating in the immense growth of the neighbourhood around the theatre, which in Grimaldi's time had gradually been transformed from a pretty suburban spot into the maze of streets and squares and closely-clustered houses which it now presents. These arrangements were all very extensive and speculative; but they overstepped the bounds of moderation in point of expense, and the season ended with a loss of 1,400*l*.

Next year they pursued a different plan, and reduced their expenditure in every department. This reduction was superintended by Grimaldi, and the very first salary he cut down was his own, from which he struck off at once two pounds per week. They tried pony-races too in the area attached to the theatre, and, so variable is theatrical property, cleared a sum equal to their losses of the preceding year, between Easter and Whitsuntide alone. The following season* was also a successful one, and at length he began to think he should gain something by the proprietorship.

It was about this time, or rather before, that Grimaldi was subpoenaed as a witness in an action between two theatrical gentlemen, of whom Mr. Glossop was one, when his smart

parrying of a remark from a counsel engaged in the case occasioned much laughter in court.

On his name being called, and his appearing in the witness-box, there was some movement in the court, which was very crowded, the people being anxious to catch a sight of a witness whose name was so familiar. Sir James Scarlett,* who was to examine him, rose as he made his appearance, and, looking at him with great real or apparent interest, said, "Dear me! Pray, sir, are you the great Mr. Grimaldi, formerly of Covent Garden Theatre?"

The witness felt greatly confused at this inquiry, especially as it seemed to excite to a still higher pitch the curiosity of the spectators. He reddened slightly, and replied, "I used to be a pantomime actor, sir, at Covent Garden Theatre."

"Yes," said Sir James Scarlett, "I recollect you well. You are a very clever man, sir." He paused for a few seconds, and, looking up in his face, said,

"And so you really are Grimaldi, are you?"

This was more embarrassing than the other question, and Grimaldi feeling it so, fidgetted about in the box, and grew redder and redder.

"Don't blush, Mr. Grimaldi, pray don't blush; there is not the least occasion for blushing," said Sir James Scarlett.

"I don't blush, sir," rejoined the witness.

"I assure you, you need not blush so."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I really am not blushing," repeated the witness, who beginning to grow angry, repeated it with so red a face, that the spectators tittered aloud.

"I assure you, Mr. Grimaldi," said Sir James Scarlett, smiling, "that you *are* blushing violently."

face is a *Scarlet* one, I admit ; but I assure you that it is nothing more than a reflection from your own."

The people in the court shouted with laughter, and Sir James Scarlett joining in their mirth, proceeded without further remark with the business of the case.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1828.

Great kindness of Miss Kelly towards Grimaldi—His farewell benefit at Sadler's Wells ; last appearance and farewell address—He makes preparations for one more appearance at Covent Garden, but, in a conversation with Mr. Charles Kemble, meets with a disappointment—In consequence of Lord Segrave's benevolent interference, a benefit is arranged for him at Drury Lane—His last interview with Mr. Charles Kemble and Fawcett.

IN February, 1828, a very highly-esteemed and kind friend to Grimaldi, and an actress of deserved popularity, whose wonderful talents have gained for her universal praise and an ample fortune, and whose performances have been for many years the delight and admiration of the public—Miss Kelly,—called at his house to inquire after his health, and to ascertain whether it was probable that he would ever again be enabled to appear upon the stage. He replied, with natural emotion, that he could no longer dare even to hope that he should ever act more.

“Then,” asked Miss Kelly, “why not take a farewell benefit? I dare say you are not so rich as to despise the proceeds of such an undertaking.”

Grimaldi shook his head, and replying he was much poorer than anybody supposed, proceeded to lay before her his exact position, not omitting to point out, that whenever Sadler's Wells was again let by the proprietors, he would certainly lose his situation, and thus be deprived of his sole dependence. As

“Leave it all to me,” said Miss Kelly, “and I’ll arrange pretty nearly everything for you without a moment’s loss of time. There must be two benefits, one at Sadler’s Wells, and the other at Covent Garden. The former benefit must take place first, so you go and consult the proprietors upon the subject at once, and I’ll lose no time in furthering your interests elsewhere.”

The promptitude and decision which Miss Kelly so kindly evinced, infused something of a similar spirit into the invalid. He promised that he would see the proprietors immediately; and, in spite of a severe attack of spasms, which almost deprived him of speech, went that same night to Sadler’s Wells, and stated his intention to take a farewell benefit. He was received with the greatest friendship and liberality: they at once entered into his views, and gave an unanswerable proof of the sincerity with which they did so, by offering him the use of the house gratuitously. Monday, March the 17th, was fixed for the occasion; and no sooner was it known decidedly when the benefit was to take place, than Mr. T. Dibdin, assembling the company, acquainted them with the circumstance, and suggested that their offering to play gratuitously would be both a well-timed compliment and a real assistance. The hint was no sooner given than it was most cheerfully responded to: the performers immediately proffered their services, the band did the same, and every person in the theatre was anxious and eager to render every assistance in his or her power, and to “put their shoulders to the wheel, in behalf of poor old Joe.”

The following is a copy of the bill of performance put forth on this occasion :—

“SADLER’S WELLS,

severe and incessant indisposition, which has oppressed him upwards of four years, and continues without any hope of amelioration, finds himself compelled to quit the profession in which, from almost infancy, he has been honoured with as great a share of patronage and indulgence as ever fell to the lot of any candidate for public favour. Nor can he quit a theatre where his labours commenced, and were for so many years sanctioned, without attempting the honour of personally expressing his gratitude; and however inadequate he may prove to paint the sincerity of his feelings, it is his intention to offer an address of thanks to his friends and patrons, and conclude his services with the painful duty of bidding them

FAREWELL.

“The entertainments will commence with the successful romance of ‘Sixes, or the Fiend;’ Hock, (a drunken prisoner,) by Mr. Grimaldi. After which, the favourite burletta of ‘Humphrey Clinker;’ to which will be added the popular farce of ‘Wives and Partners;’ and the whole to conclude with a grand Masquerade on the stage, in the course of which several novelties will be presented: Mr. Blackmore on the *corde volante*; Mr. Walbourn’s dance as ‘Dusty Bob;’ Mr. Campbell’s song of ‘Bound ’Prentice to a Waterman;’ Mrs. Searle’s skipping-rope dance; Mr. Payne’s juggling evolutions; and the celebrated dance between Mr. J. S. Grimaldi and Mr. Ellar. After which, Mr. Grimaldi will deliver his farewell address: and the whole will conclude with a brilliant display of fireworks, expressive of

GRIMALDI’S THANKS.”

The house was crowded to suffocation on the night. He performed the trifling part for which he had been announced in

“Ladies and Gentlemen,—I appear before you this evening for the last time at this theatre. Doubtless, there are many persons present who think that I am a very aged man: I have now an opportunity of convincing them to the contrary. I was born on the 18th of December, 1779,* and, consequently, on the 18th of last December attained the age of forty-eight.

“At a very early age—before that of three years,† I was introduced to the public by my father at this theatre; and ever since that period have I held a situation in this establishment. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I have been engaged at this theatre for five-and-forty years.

“By strict attention, perseverance, and exertion, did I arrive at the height of my profession, and, proud I am to acknowledge, have oftentimes been honoured with your smiles, approbation, and support. It is now three years since I have taken a regular engagement, owing to extreme and dangerous indisposition: with patience have I waited in hopes my health might once more be re-established, and I again meet your smiles as before;—but, I regret to say, there is little, or, in fact, no improvement perceivable, and it would therefore now be folly in me ever to think of again returning to my professional duties. I could not, however, leave this theatre without returning my grateful thanks to my friends and patrons, and the public; and now do I venture to offer them, secure in the conviction that they will not be slighted or deemed utterly unworthy of acceptance.

“To the proprietors of this theatre, the performers, the gentlemen of the band—in fact, to every individual connected with it, I likewise owe and offer my sincere thanks for their assistance this evening. And now, ladies and gentlemen, it only remains for me to utter one dreadful word, ere I depart—Fare-

He was received and listened to in the kindest and most encouraging manner ; but his spirits met with so severe a shock in bidding a formal farewell to his friends, that he did not entirely recover from the effects of it for some days, and so completely dreaded going through a similar ordeal at Covent Garden, that had not Miss Kelly kept him firm to the task, he would have abandoned his intention with regard to the latter place altogether.

The receipts of this benefit were 230*l.* ; but he received a great number of anonymous letters, containing remittances, which amounted in the whole to 85*l.* more ; so that he cleared by the night's performance, a total of 315*l.*, which was a well-timed and most fortunate assistance to him.

Some short time after this evening, Mr. T. Dibdin left Sadler's Wells. He was succeeded in the capacity of stage-manager by Mr. Campbell, who retained the situation with credit to himself and satisfaction to the proprietors for several years : remaining in it, in fact, until the establishment was again let.

On the 25th of March, being a little recovered, and having at last made up his mind to take the second benefit, Grimaldi walked to Covent Garden, and having been warmly welcomed by the performers, went to Mr. Charles Kemble's room, and was received by him in the most friendly manner.

"Well, Joe," said he, "I hope you have come to say that you feel able to be with us again?"

"Indeed, my dear sir, it is unfortunately quite the reverse ; for I am come to tell you that I never shall act more."

"I am very sorry to hear you say so, Joe ; I have been in hopes it would be otherwise," returned Mr. Kemble.

"We have known each other a good many years, sir," said

“Try me, Joe, try me!”

He then stated his intention of taking a farewell benefit at Covent Garden, and requested Mr. Kemble's assistance in obtaining the use of the house, if possible, at a low price; but if not, then upon the usual terms.

Mr. Kemble listened until he had finished, and said, “My dear Joe, I perfectly understand you; and if the theatre were solely mine, I should say, ‘Take it—’tis yours, and without charge at all:’ but, unfortunately, our theatre is in Chancery, and nothing can be done without the consent of others. However, Joe, the proprietors meet every Tuesday, and I will mention it to them. So after Tuesday you shall hear from me.”

He thanked Mr. Kemble, and they parted. He awaited the arrival of the day fixed in great anxiety; but it came and passed, and so did another Tuesday, and several more days, without any intelligence arriving to relieve his suspense. Seeing it announced in the papers that Mr. Kemble was about to proceed to Edinburgh, to act there, he wrote a note to him, reminding him of what had passed between them, and requesting a reply. This was on the 13th of April. In the evening of the same day he received an answer, not from Mr. Kemble himself, but from Mr. Robertson, the respected treasurer of the theatre, which ran thus:

“DEAR SIR,

“I am directed by the proprietors of this theatre to acquaint you, in reply to your application relative to a benefit, that they much regret that the present situation of the theatre with regard to Chancery proceedings will prevent the possibility of their accommodating your wishes.”

been with the public, could not help deeming it somewhat harsh and unkind conduct on the part of the proprietors to refuse him the house for one night, for which, of course, he would have paid.

Mr. Price was the lessee of Drury Lane at this time, and once or twice Grimaldi thought of applying to him, but fearing it would be useless, dismissed the idea. In this state of indecision two or three weeks passed away, when one day he received a note from Mr. Dunn, the Drury Lane treasurer, requesting him to attend at the theatre at twelve o'clock next day, as Mr. Price wished to see him. On complying with this very unexpected invitation, he was informed by Mr. Dunn, that the lessee had been compelled to meet another party on business, and therefore could not wait to see him; but that he was deputed to say, that he had been apprised of Grimaldi's wish to take a benefit, and that the theatre was at his service for the evening of Friday, June 27th, 1828, the last night but one of the season. "That," added Mr. Dunn, "is unfortunately the only evening we can offer you. Had Mr. Price known earlier of your wishes, you would have had an extended choice of nights, and he would have felt happy in obliging so distinguished a veteran."

Much delighted with this politeness and consideration, he gratefully accepted the theatre for the night mentioned. He was much puzzled at the time to think who could have mentioned the circumstance to Mr. Price, and befriended him so greatly; on mature consideration, however, he had little doubt that it was Lord Segrave to whom he was obliged, for when he told Miss Kelly that he had been offered Drury Lane, she remembered Lord Segrave having expressed great surprise when

fatigable exertions of Miss Kelly, he was under deep and lasting obligations. These were, Mr. James Wallack, Mr. W. Barrymore, and Mr. Peake, scarcely less a favourite with the public than with the members of the profession, to the literature of which his abilities and humour have been long and successfully devoted.

About the middle of June, hearing that Mr. Charles Kemble had returned from the North, Grimaldi resolved to call upon him, and to thank him for the exertions which he felt assured he had made relative to his benefit. He had another object in view,—which was, to apprise him that he had entered into engagements of a satisfactory nature at Drury Lane; which intelligence he hoped would afford him unmitigated satisfaction, after the strong desire he had always expressed for his prosperity.

Mr. Charles Kemble was alone when Grimaldi was shown up to his room: he said, that having recently heard Mr. Kemble had returned from Scotland, he had determined to lose no time in calling to thank him for the exertions which he had no doubt he had made to enable him to take a benefit at Covent Garden. Although his kindness was unavailing, he was anxious to assure him that he perfectly appreciated it. He then went on to say that Mr. Price had in the handsomest manner offered the use of Drury Lane Theatre, at which he was to take a benefit on the 27th; and that he had every reason to believe, from the interest which was making for him, that it would be a very great one.

Mr. Kemble was evidently surprised to hear this, and instead of manifesting the gratification which Grimaldi had expected evinced feelings of a directly opposite nature. At length he exclaimed, "Take a benefit at Drury Lane!"

With these words, he placed in Mr. Kemble's hands an announce-bill, of which we subjoin a copy. These bills were afterwards recalled, for reasons which will presently appear.

"THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

"MR. GRIMALDI'S LAST APPEARANCE IN PUBLIC,

"On Friday, June 27, 1828.

"It is respectfully announced, that Mr. Grimaldi, after more than four years of severe and unremitting indisposition, which continues without hope of alleviation, is compelled, finally, to relinquish a profession in which, from infancy, he has been honoured with as liberal a share of public patronage as ever has been accorded to candidates of much higher pretensions.

"Numerous patrons having expressed surprise that Mr. Grimaldi's benefit did not take place at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, he takes the liberty of stating, that after bidding farewell to his friends and supporters at Sadler's Wells (the scene of his favoured exertions from the early age of three years), he applied to the present directors of Covent Garden Theatre, who, in the kindest manner, expressed their regret that the well-known situation of the theatre precluded the possibility of indulging their strong inclination to comply with the request he had ventured to prefer. On transferring the application to Mr. Price, the lessee of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, Mr. Grimaldi has the pleasure to say, that it was acceded to with a celerity which enhanced the obligation, and demands his most sincere acknowledgment.

"Mr. Grimaldi made his first appearance* at the Theatre

Royal, Drury Lane, where he continued twenty-four years, and, but for a very trifling misunderstanding, might have retained his engagement to the present time: it is, however, most grateful to his feelings to finish his public labours on the spot where they commenced, and where for nearly a quarter of a century his exertions were fostered by public indulgence, and stimulated by public applause.*

“To many anxious friends who, from a genuine spirit of good-will, have inquired the cause why, during so long a period of professional exertion, Mr. Grimaldi has not been able to realize a competency that might have precluded the necessity of this appeal, he can only plead the expenses attendant on infirmities, produced by exhausting and laborious duties, the destructive burthen of which were felt some years before he finally yielded to their pressure, and which at length compelled him to relax his exertions at the period when ability to continue them would have insured him a comfortable independence. However inadequate he may prove to the painful yet pleasing endeavour to express personally his gratitude on the night of his retreat, it is his intention to offer an address of thanks, in which, though mere words may not be equal to paint the depth and sincerity of his feelings, he will hope to gain credit for the heartfelt sensation of dutiful respect which accompanies his last farewell.”

1805, but his last performance at Drury Lane was on November 9th in that year, and admitting the generally received belief of his *début* “in Robinson Crusoe,” his continuing at Drury Lane would have been twenty-five years, not twenty-four.

* To his old associate, Norman, the Pantaloon, Grimaldi, in a letter dated April 23, 1829, writes,—“I suppose you know I have taken my farewell of the public: both at the Wells and lastly at Drury Lane, they having refused me

Mr. Kemble read the bill through very attentively, and laid it gently upon the table without saying a word, but still looking very much displeased. Grimaldi, not knowing very well what to say, remained silent, and nothing was said for a minute or two, when Fawcett entered the room.

"Here, Fawcett," said Mr. Kemble, "here's a bill for you: read that."

Fawcett read it in profound silence, and when he had done so, looked as if he could not at all understand what was going forward, or what he ought to do. At length he asked what he was to infer from it, and Mr. Kemble was about to reply, when Grimaldi interrupted him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but if Mr. Fawcett is to be appealed to in this business, it is but just that, before he expresses any opinion upon it, he should understand all the circumstances."

With this, he proceeded to detail them as briefly as he could. When he had finished, Mr. Kemble said, with an air of great vexation, "Why did you not say, that if you could not take a benefit here, you would do so at the other house! I declare you should have had a night for nothing, sooner than you should have gone there."

Although this remark was very unexpected, Grimaldi made no further reply than that he had never thought of applying to Mr. Price, but that that gentleman, he presumed at the solicitation of some unknown friend, had made an offer to him; he then begged Mr. Fawcett, as he now knew all, to express his opinion upon the matter.

"Why, really," said that gentleman, "had I been situated as Grimaldi has been, I should certainly have acted as he has

Grimaldi, and I hope you will take my advice, not to send out this bill. It might be deemed offensive, and cannot, as I see, be productive of any good whatever."

Grimaldi thanked him, and expressed his intention of acting upon his opinion. Addressing Mr. Kemble, he said, that from what had just before fallen from him, it appeared that if he had thought proper, he (Grimaldi) might have had Covent Garden for his benefit, even gratuitously; but that presuming he had not the power of taking a benefit at Drury Lane, he had refused him, which was not the conduct of a friend, and was very unlike the treatment he had expected to receive. He then left the room, and never saw either gentleman again.

Upon cool reflection he was inclined to consider that Mr. Kemble had some private and very good reasons, arising out of the management of the theatre, for acting as he had done, which there is little doubt was the case, as he could have neither had the intention nor the wish to injure a man whom he invariably treated with kindness and courtesy.

The stage has now lost the services of both these gentlemen. Poor Fawcett died some time since, and Mr. Charles Kemble has retired from the boards of which he was so long, both from his public and private character, a shining ornament.

CHAPTER XXV.

1828 to 1836.

The farewell benefit at Drury Lane—Grimaldi's last appearance and parting address—The Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, and its prompt reply to his communication—Miserable career and death of his son—His wife dies, and he returns from Woolwich (whither he had previously removed) to London—His retirement.

THE three gentlemen who were mentioned in conjunction with Miss Kelly, in the course of the last chapter, exerted themselves with so much energy, that Grimaldi's benefit far exceeded his most sanguine expectations. In addition to the most effective company of the theatre, were secured the services of Miss Kelly, and Madam Fearon;* Miss Fanny Ayton, Miss Love,† Mathews, Keeley, and Bartley, besides an immense number of pantomime performers, who crowded to offer their aid, and among whom were—Barnes, Southby, Ridgway and his two sons, and young Grimaldi. Mr. James Wallack arranged everything, and exerted himself as much as he could have done if the night had been his own. The announced bill ran thus:—

MR. GRIMALDI'S FAREWELL BENEFIT.

On Friday, June 27th, 1828,

will be performed,

JONATHAN IN ENGLAND;

after which

A MUSICAL MELANGE.

To be succeeded by

THE ADOPTED CHILD,

and concluded with

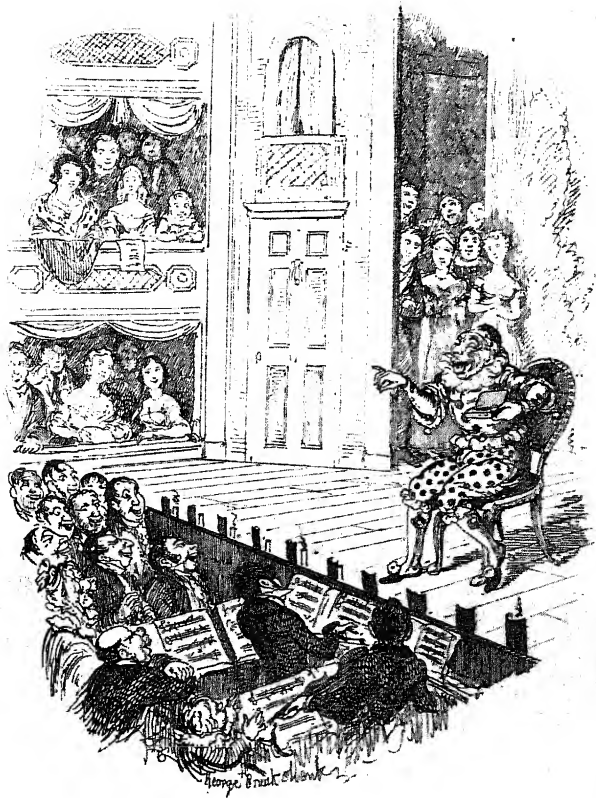
HARLEQUIN HOAX,

In which Mr. Grimaldi will act clown in one scene, sing a song, and
speak his

FAREWELL ADDRESS.

It was greatly in favour of the benefit, that Covent Garden had closed the night before; the pit and galleries were completely filled in less than half an hour after opening the doors, the boxes were very good from the first, and at half-price were as crowded as the other parts of the house. In the last piece Grimaldi acted one scene, but being wholly unable to stand, went through it seated upon a chair. Even in this distressing condition he retained enough of his old humour to succeed in calling down repeated shouts of merriment and laughter. The song, too, in theatrical language, "went" as well as ever; and at length, when the pantomime approached its termination, he made his appearance before the audience in his private dress, amidst thunders of applause. As soon as silence could be obtained, and he could muster up sufficient courage to speak, he advanced to the foot-lights, and delivered, as well as his emotions would permit, the following Farewell Address.---

"Ladies and Gentlemen:—In putting off the clown's garment, allow me to drop also the clown's taciturnity, and address you in a few parting sentences. I entered early on this course of life, and leave it prematurely. Eight-and-forty years only have passed over my head—but I am going as fast down the hill of life as that older Joe—John Anderson. Like vaulting ambition, I have overleaped myself, and pay the penalty in an advanced old age. If I have now any aptitude for tumbling, it is through bodily infirmity, for I am worse on my feet than I used to be on my head. It is four years since I jumped my last jump—filched my last oyster—boiled my last sausage—and set in for retirement. Not quite so well provided for, I must acknowledge, as in the days of my clownship, for then, I dare say, some of you remember, I used to have a fowl in one pocket



With the same respectful feelings as ever do I find myself in your presence—in the presence of my last audience—this kindly assemblage so happily contradicting the adage that a favourite has no friends. For the benevolence that brought you hither—accept, ladies and gentlemen, my warmest and most grateful thanks, and believe, that of one and all, Joseph Grimaldi takes a double leave, with a farewell on his lips, and a tear in his eyes.

“Farewell! That you and yours may ever enjoy that greatest earthly good—health, is the sincere wish of your faithful and obliged servant. God bless you all!”

It was with no trifling difficulty that Grimaldi reached the conclusion of this little speech, although the audience cheered loudly, and gave him every possible expression of encouragement and sympathy. When he had finished, he still stood in the same place, bewildered and motionless, his feelings being so greatly excited, that the little power illness had left wholly deserted him. In this condition he stood for a minute or two, when Mr. Harley, who was at the side scene, commiserating his emotion, kindly advanced and led him off the stage, assisted by his son. As a token of his respect and gratitude, Grimaldi took off a new wig which he wore on the occasion, and presented it to Mr. Harley, together with the original address, which he held in his hand. Our friend has them both, carefully preserved in a small museum of wigs, autographs, portraits, and other memorials of the most distinguished men in every branch of the profession, of which for upwards of twenty-eight years he has been deservedly one of the most popular members.

Having been led into a private room, and strengthened with a couple of glasses of Madeira, Grimaldi had to sustain another,

hundreds followed the vehicle until it reached his house, and upon getting out he was again hailed with a similar overwhelming shout of approbation and regard; nor could the crowd be prevailed upon to disperse until he had appeared on the top of the steps, and made his farewell bow.

Grimaldi was too exhausted and nervous, after the trying scenes through which he had just passed, to make any calculation that night of what the benefit had produced; but the next day, being somewhat recovered, he entered into the matter, and found the result to be as follows:—The house cost him 210*l.*, the printing 70*l.* more, making the expenses 280*l.* The money taken at the doors amounted to rather more than 400*l.*, besides which he sold 150*l.* worth of tickets, making a total of 550*l.* Deducting the expenses, the clear profits of the benefit amounted to 270*l.*

There was another source of great profit, which must not be forgotten, namely, the number of anonymous communications Grimaldi received, enclosing sums of money, and wishing him a happy retirement. He received six letters, each containing 20*l.*, eleven containing 10*l.*, and sixteen containing 5*l.* each. Thus, the amount forwarded by unknown hands was no less than 310*l.*, which, added to the amount of profits just mentioned, makes the gross sum realized by this last benefit 580*l.*, besides the 315*l.* which he had cleared at Sadler's Wells.

The highest tribute that can be paid to those who in secret forwarded their munificent donations, or to those who rendered him their valuable professional assistance, or to that large number who came forward to cheer the last public moments of a man who had so often, and so successfully, beguiled their leisure hours, is, that they smoothed the hard bed of premature and crippled old age, and rendered the slow decline of a life, scarcely

Only one more circumstance connected with Grimaldi's theatrical existence remains to be told, and to that one we most anxiously and emphatically invite the attention of all who admire the drama—and what man of thought or feeling does not?—of all those who devote themselves to the cause of real charity—and of all those who now, reaping large gains from the exercise of a glittering and dazzling profession, forget that youth and strength will not last for ever, and that the more intoxicating their triumphs now, the more probable is the advent of a time of adversity and decay.

Counting over his gains, and dwelling upon his helpless state, Grimaldi was not long in finding that even now, whenever his little salary at Sadler's Wells should cease, he would not have adequate means of support. There was only one source to which he could apply for relief, and to that source he at once turned.

It is well known to all our readers, that two charitable societies exist in London, called the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatrical Funds. They are distinct bodies, but were established with the same great and benevolent object. Every actor who, throughout his engagement at either of the large theatres, contributes a certain portion of his earnings to one of these funds, is entitled, if he should ever be reduced to the necessity of seeking it, to an annuity in proportion to the time for which he has contributed. To one of these most excellent institutions,—the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund,—Grimaldi had belonged for more than thirty years, promoting its interests not merely by his subscription, but by every means in his power. Feeling that in his hour of need and distress he had some claim upon its funds, he addressed the secretary, and stated the situation to which he was reduced. Early on the following morning

immediately the amount of one quarter in advance. His fears vanished at once, and he felt that want at all events could never be his portion.*

It can be observed at no better place than this, that all applications for relief from these funds are known only to the respective committees, and that the names of all annuitants are kept strictly secret during their lives; that the distribution of their property is confided to gentlemen accustomed to act with the utmost delicacy and discrimination, and that some of the greatest ornaments of the English stage have been relieved in their old age, when their powers of amusing and delighting were gone,—not as poor pensioners, or objects of compassion, but as persons who, not forgetting their poor brethren in their affluence, were not themselves forgotten, when unexpected misfortune or sickness fell upon them.

The unfortunate young man to whom allusion has been frequently made in the course of the last few pages, was, as may easily be imagined, one of the chief sources of Grimaldi's care and trouble in his latter days. After remaining in his house for two months in a state of madness, he grew better, left one night to attend Sadler's Wells, where he was engaged, and was seen no more until the middle of the following year, when he

* Mr. Harley, as master of the Drury Lane Fund, at the Annual Dinner of that glorious charity, in the June following Grimaldi's death, thus alluded to the assistance which the benevolence of their patrons had conferred on the distinguished mime:—"Yet shall delicacy suffer no violence in adducing one example, for death has hushed his cock-crowing cacchination and uproarious merriment. The mortal Jupiter of practical joke—the Michael Angelo of buffoonery, who, if he was *Grim-all-day*, was sure to make *you* chuckle at night, he was rendered happy by your bounty. Yes, sirs, this star of eccentric brilliancy in the laughing hemisphere of fun and drollery—this comical reminiscence of 'Me and my Neddy,' 'Mother Goose,' 'Hot Cockles,' and 'Tippitywitchet,' would have set in sorrow but for this institution. You raised his drooping spirit, borne

was dismissed from Sadler's Wells on account of his dissolute conduct; engaged at Drury Lane with a salary of eight pounds per week, most favourably received, and discharged at the end of the first season for his profligacy and drunkenness.

After this, he obtained an engagement for a month at the Pavilion in Whitechapel Road, but left that theatre also in disgrace, and fell into the lowest state of wretchedness and poverty. His dress had fallen to rags, his feet were thrust into two worn-out slippers, his face was pale with disease, and squalid with dirt and want, and he was steeped in degradation. The man who might have earned with ease, with comfort, and respectability, from six to seven hundred pounds a year, and have raised himself to far greater gains by common providence and care, was reduced to such a dreadful state of destitution and filth, that even his own parents could scarcely recognise him.

He was again received, and again found a home with his sick father. At Christmas, 1829, he obtained a situation at the Coburg, through the kindness of Davidge, and there he remained until Easter, 1830, when he took the benefit of the Insolvent Debtors' Act, to relieve himself from the creditors who were hunting him down. His support in prison and contingent expenses, amounting to forty pounds, were all paid by his father.

He next accepted an engagement at Edinburgh, which turned out a failure; and another at Manchester, at Christmas, 1830, by which he gained a few pounds. He then returned to the Coburg, where he might have almost permanently remained, but for his own misconduct, which once again cast him on the world.

In the following autumn, the son again presented himself at his father's door, reduced to a state of beggary and want not to

misdeeds, outrageous conduct, and gross and violent abuse, besought his father not to receive him, or aid him again, remembering how much he had already wasted the small remnant of his means only to minister to his extravagance and folly. But he could not witness his helpless and miserable state without compassion, and he was once more forgiven, once more became an inmate of the house, and remained there in a state of utter dependence.

In 1832, Sadler's Wells was let out for one season to Mrs. Fitzwilliam and Mr. W. H. Williams. They retained Grimaldi for some little time, but finding that he must be dismissed very shortly, he made preparations for meeting the consequent reduction of his income, by giving up the house in which he had lived for several years, and taking a cottage at Woolwich,* whither he had an additional inducement to retire, in the hope that change of air might prove beneficial to his wife, who had already been ill for some time.

They repaired to their new house in the latter end of September, and in the beginning of November the son received a letter from a brother actor, entreating him to perform for a benefit, at Sadler's Wells. His reception was so cordial and his acting so good, that on the very same evening, notwithstanding all that had previously passed, he was offered an engagement for the ensuing Christmas at the Coburg, and the next day, on his return to Woolwich, he communicated the intelligence. The

* Grimaldi's residence, while manager of the Wells, was at No. 8, Exmouth-street, Spa-fields:—in a letter, dated April 23, 1829, Joe writes—"I have moved to No. 23, Garnault-place, Spa-fields, about two hundred yards from where I did live." This residence he relinquished at Michaelmas, 1832, and took a small house, No. 6, Prospect-row, Woolwich. After the death of his wife, several letters are addressed from 31, George-street, Woolwich: one is emphatically

the Queen's Theatre waited upon him, and offered him an engagement for a short time at a weekly salary of 4*l*. He agreed to take it, and arranged to begin on the following Monday, November 25, in a part called Black Cæsar.

It was sorely against his father's will that he went to fulfil this engagement, for his health had been waning for some time, and he was fearful that he might relapse into his old habits. However, he was determined to go, and borrowing some money of his father, as was his usual wont, he left Woolwich on the Sunday morning.

On the Wednesday, Grimaldi had occasion to go to town, and eagerly embraced it as an opportunity for seeing his son, to whom, despite all the anxiety and losses he had caused him, he was still most tenderly attached. He wrote to him, naming the friend's house at which he would be found, and the young man came. He looked in excellent health—was in high spirits, and boasted of his success in terms which from all accounts, it appeared, were justified by its extent. Shortly after dinner he left, observing, that as he had to appear in the first scene of the first piece, he had no time to lose. His father never saw him more.

Grimaldi returned to Woolwich next day, and anxiously hoped on Sunday to see the misguided man to dinner, agreeably to a promise he had made. The day passed away, but he did not come; a few more days elapsed, and then he received an intimation from a stranger that his son was ill. He immediately wrote to a friend, (Mr. Glendinning the printer,) requesting him to ascertain the nature of his indisposition, which he feared was only the effect of some new intemperance, and if it should appear necessary, to procure him medical assistance. For two days he heard nothing; but this did not alarm him, for he entertained no doubt that his son's illness would disappear when the fumes

On the 11th of December, a friend came to his house as he was sitting by his wife's bed, to which she was confined by illness, and when, with much difficulty, he had descended to the parlour, told him with great care and delicacy that his son was dead.

In one instant every feeling of decrepitude or bodily weakness left him; his limbs recovered their original vigour; all his lassitude and debility vanished; a difficulty of breathing, under which he had long laboured, disappeared, and starting from his seat, he rushed to his wife's chamber, tearing, without the least difficulty, up a flight of stairs, which, a quarter of an hour before, it had taken him ten minutes to climb. He hurried to her bed-side, told her that her son was dead, heard her first passionate exclamation of grief, and falling into a chair, was once again an enfeebled and crippled old man.

The remains of the young man were interred, a few days afterwards, in the burial-ground of Whitfield's Tabernacle, in Tottenham-court-road; but some circumstances, apparently of a suspicious nature, being afterwards rumoured about, and it being whispered that marks of blows had been seen upon his head by those who laid him out, an inquest was holden upon the young man's body. Grimaldi states that the body was exhumed: from some passages in the newspapers of the day, it would appear that an informal inquest was held, and that the body was not disinterred. Be this as it may, it was proved before the coroner that his death had arisen from the natural consequences of a mis-spent life; that his body was covered with a fearful inflammation, and that he had died in a state of wild and furious madness, rising from his bed and dressing himself in stage costume to act snatches of the parts to which he

suffering for two years afterwards, until death happily relieved her.

He was now left alone in the world; he had always been a domesticated man, delighting in nothing more than in the society of his relations and friends; and the condition of solitary desolation in which he was now left, nearly drove him into a state of melancholy madness. His crippled limbs and broken bodily health rendered it necessary to his existence that he should have an attentive nurse, and occasionally at least cheerful society; finding his situation wholly insupportable, he resolved to return to town, and wrote to a friend,* whose wife was his only remaining relative, to procure a small house for him in his own neighbourhood, where he too had lived so long and happily. A neat little dwelling, next door to this friend's house; in Southampton-street, Pentonville, being at that time to let, was taken and furnished for him, and thither he removed

* Mr. Arthur, then residing at 35, Southampton-street, but since dead: his widow and family have left the neighbourhood. Mrs. Arthur was not "Grimaldi's only remaining relation;" she was originally a servant to Mr. Hughes, Joe's brother-in-law. Grimaldi's house was No. 33 in the same street, not "next door," and his solicitude to reach town, and occupy this house, his last home, is the subject of a long letter, now among many of Joe's autographs, in the possession of a gentleman resident in Highbury Park, Islington.

Early in the biography of Grimaldi, it will be remembered, mention is made of a sister, and in fact she is noticed as having made her *débüt* with him at Sadler's Wells, in 1781. This sister, according to Decastro, was named Mary, and married Signor Grimaldi's pupil, Lascelles Williamson; but of late years had been altogether lost sight of. Joe remembered her not in the disposal of his effects in his will; but soon after his death—and the circumstance became known through the newspapers—Joe's executor received a letter, in the name of Jane Taylor, which stated that she was in extreme poverty; that she was Joe's sister, and mournfully asked if he had borne her in mind, and had bequeathed her any assistance. The executor replied, that she had not been mentioned by Grimaldi in any way; and the recipients of what he possessed had been named by himself.

XX. Further application followed: and probably she sleeps too with her

without more delay. Many of his old friends came from time to time to cheer him with a few minutes' conversation, and he experienced the warmest and kindest treatment from his neighbours, and from Mr. Richard Hughes, who bore in mind his promise to his dying sister, to the last moment of Grimaldi's life.

He concludes his Memoirs by taking a more cheerful view of his condition than could well have been expected of a man suffering so much, and ends in these words:—

“My histrionic acquaintance frequently favour me with their company, when we together review past scenes, and contrast them with those of the present time. My esteemed friend, Alfred Bunn, has been with me this very day, and I expect to see my amiable patroness, if she will permit me to call her so, Miss Kelly, to-morrow.

“In my solitary hours—and in spite of all the kindness of my friends I have many of them—my thoughts often dwell upon the past: and there is one circumstance which always affords me unmitigated satisfaction; it is simply that I cannot recollect one single instance in which I have intentionally wronged man, woman, or child, and this gives me great satisfaction and comfort.

“This is the 18th of December, 1836. I was born on the 18th of December, 1779, and consequently have completed my 57th year.

“Life is a game we are bound to play—
The wise enjoy it, fools grow sick of it;
Losers, we find, have the stakes to pay,
That winners may laugh, for that's the trick of it.

“J. GRIMALDI.”

CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

GRIMALDI died on the 31st of May, 1837, having survived the completion of the last chapter of his biography just five months, during which his health had considerably improved, although his bodily energies and physical powers had remained in the same state of hopeless prostration. Having gradually recovered the effects of the severe mental shocks which had crowded upon him in his decline, he had regained his habitual serenity and cheerfulness, and appeared likely to live, and even to enjoy life—incompatible with all enjoyment as his condition would seem to have been—for many years. He had no other wish than to be happy in the society of his old friends; and uttered no other complaint than that, in their absence, he sometimes found his solitude heavy and irksome. He looked forward to the publication of his manuscript with an anxiety which it is impossible to describe, and imagined that the day on which he exhibited it in a complete form to his friends, would be the proudest of his life.

He was destined never to experience this harmless gratification; the sudden dissolution which deprived him of it, mercifully released him from all the pains and sufferings which could not fail to have been, sooner or later, the attendants upon that state of death in life to which he had been untimely reduced.

It had been Grimaldi's habit for some time previous to his

long hours he spent by his lonely fireside. Utterly bereft of the use of his limbs, he used to be carried backwards and forwards (he had only a few doors to go) on the shoulders of a man.

On the night of his death,* he was carried home in the usual manner, and cheerfully bidding his companion good night, observed that he should be ready for him on the morrow at the customary time. He had not long been in bed, when his housekeeper fancying she heard a noise in his room, hurried down,

* Grimaldi for some months previous to his death frequented the coffee-room of the "Marquis of Cornwallis" Tavern in Southampton-street, Pentonville. Mr. George Cook, the proprietor, considering his infirmity, or loss of the use of his lower extremities, used to fetch him on his back, and take him home in the same manner. On the Wednesday evening, May 31st, he was brought to the coffee-room by Mr. Cook, and seemed quite exhilarated; his conversation and humour smacking of the vivacity of former years; and his anecdotes of the olden times and past events contributed a fund of amusement to those enjoying the conviviality of the night. Joe's customary beverage was a little Scotch ale, or a small quantity of gin and water, during the evening. On the inquest, Joe's housekeeper, Susannah Hill, stated that on Wednesday evening he complained to her of a tightness of the chest, and his appetite seemed not so good as usual. About half-past ten, she went to the Marquis of Cornwallis, to apprise her master that it was time to return home; and assisted him on to Mr. Cook's back. Joe, as usual, quite sober, reached home about a quarter before eleven; and on parting said to Mr. Cook, "God bless you, my boy, I shall be ready for you to-morrow night!" His housekeeper assisted Grimaldi to his bedroom, placed a light on his table, as was her custom, then retired to her bedroom. In the course of the night she was awakened by an unusual noise, similar to loud snoring in her master's room. She rose, went in, but all was then quiet, the light still burning; and she returned to her bed. Between five and six o'clock in the morning, having risen, she went into Grimaldi's room, and on approaching the bed was shocked on discovering her master a corpse. She ran for Mr. Fennill, a surgeon in the neighbourhood, who immediately attended; pronounced him quite dead; said that he had been so some hours; and that his death he had no doubt arose from natural causes. The inquest held at the Marquis of Cornwallis declared their verdict, "Died by the visitation of God."

Joe was consigned to his last home at one o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, June 5th: the funeral was strictly private and simply plain—a hearse and two

but all was quiet: she went in again later in the night, and found him dead. The body was cold, for he had been dead some hours.

A coroner's inquest was held on the following day. The testimony of the medical gentlemen who had been promptly called in, fully established the fact that his death had arisen from causes purely natural; and the jury at once returned a verdict that he had died by the visitation of God.

He was buried on the ensuing Monday, June the 6th, in the burying-ground of St. James's Chapel, on Pentonville Hill. In the next grave lie the bones of his friend, Mr. Charles Dibdin, —so frequently mentioned in these volumes; the author of many of the pieces in which he shone in his best days, and of many of the songs with which he was wont to set his audience in a roar.*

Any attempted summary of Grimaldi's peculiarities in this place would be an impertinence. There are many who remember him, and they need not be told how rich his humour was: to those who do not recollect him in his great days, it would be impossible to convey any adequate idea of his extraordinary performances. There are no standards to compare him with, or models to judge him by; all his excellences were his own, and there are none resembling them among the pantomime actors of the present day.

This is not said with any view of depreciating the abilities of the many clever actors we have in this peculiar department. Among a variety of others, Smith and Payne of Covent Garden,

* The following inscription is on his grave-stone:—

(not of Lombard-street), and Wieland, of Drury Lane, may be mentioned as possessing grotesque humour of no ordinary kind; while for mere feats of tumbling dexterity, Brown, King, and Gibson of the Adelphi, perhaps stand unrivalled. It is no disparagement to all or any of these actors of pantomime, to say, that the genuine droll, the grimacing, filching, irresistible clown left the stage with Grimaldi, and though often heard of, has never since been seen.*

In private, Grimaldi was a general favourite, not only among his equals, but with his superiors and inferiors. That he was a man of the kindest heart, and the most child-like simplicity, nobody who has read the foregoing pages can for a moment doubt. He was innocent of all caution in worldly matters, and has been known, on the seller's warranty,† to give forty guineas for a gold watch, which, as it subsequently turned out, would have been dear at ten. Among many acts of private goodness may be mentioned—although he shrunk from the slightest allusion to the story—his release of a brother actor from Lancaster jail, under circumstances which showed a pure benevolence of heart, and delicacy of feeling, that would have done honour to a prince.

With far more temptations to indulge in the pleasures of the table than most men encounter, Grimaldi was through life remarkably temperate, never having been seen, indeed, in a state

* Tom Matthews, perhaps, presents at this time the nearest approach.

† The seller's warranty was doubtless that of some Jew money-lender, by which class of persons he seems to have been almost devoured: when their pressure became insupportable, or they pushed their claims to a consummation not too devoutly to be wished, and sent a sheriff's officer to enforce the demand, Joe was wont to accompany them to the shop of Mr. Crouch, a pawnbroker, in Ray-street, Clerkenwell, by whom the sum was immediately paid. When the

drinking ; and it was supposed, at the time of his decease, that an attack of indigestion consequent upon too hearty a supper at too late an hour materially hastened, if it did not actually occasion, his death.

Many readers will ridicule the idea of a clown being a man of great feeling and sensibility : Grimaldi was so, notwithstanding, and suffered most severely from the afflictions which befel him. The loss of his wife, to whom he had been long and devotedly attached, preyed upon his mind to a greater or less extent for many years. The reckless career and dreadful death of his only son bowed him down with grief. The young man's notorious conduct had embittered the best portion of his existence : and his sudden death, when a better course seemed opening before him, had well-nigh terminated his unhappy father's days.

But although, in the weakened state in which he then was, the sad event preying alike upon his mind and body, changed Grimaldi's appearance in a few weeks to that of a shrunken, imbecile old man ; and although, when he had in some measure recovered from this heavy blow, he had to mourn the loss of his wife, with whom he had lived happily for more than thirty years, he survived the trials to which he had been exposed, and lived to recover his cheerfulness and peace.

Deprived of all power of motion ; doomed to bear, at a time of life when he might reasonably have looked forward to many years of activity and exertion, the worst bodily evils of the most helpless old age ; condemned to drag out the remainder of his days in a solitary chamber, when all those who make up the sum of home were cold in death, his existence would seem to have been a weary one indeed ; but he was patient and resigned under all these trials, and in time grew contented, and even

poignant may perhaps teach more strongly than a hundred homilies, that there are no afflictions which time will not soften and fortitude overcome. Let those who smile at the deduction of so trite a moral from the biography of a clown, reflect, that the fewer the resources of a man's own mind, the greater his merit in rising superior to misfortune. Let them remember too, that in this case the light and life of a brilliant theatre were exchanged in an instant for the gloom and sadness of a dull sick-room.

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